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# HILARY HAHN, VIOLIN

This evening marks Hilary Hahn's second appearance with the Series.

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7:00 P.M., FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2023  
FOLLY THEATER  
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

Hilary Hahn, violin

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# HILARY HAHN, VIOLIN

MUSIC BY JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

Violin Sonata No. 2 in A minor, BWV 1003

- I. Grave
- II. Fuga
- III. Andante
- IV. Allegro

Partita No. 3 in E Major for Violin, BWV 1006

- I. Preludio
- II. Loure
- III. Gavotte en rondeau
- IV. Menuet I
- V. Menuet II
- VI. Bourrée
- VII. Gigue

INTERMISSION

Violin Sonata No. 3 in C Major, BWV 1005

- I. Adagio
- II. Fuga
- III. Largo
- IV. Allegro assai

## PROGRAM NOTES

■ Although Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) is most commonly associated with the organ, he began his musical career playing the violin. In fact, it's strongly speculated that the most famous organ piece of all time, Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor, was originally a work for violin. Bach's son, Carl Philipp Emanuel, said of his father, "in his youth, and until the approach of old age, he played the violin cleanly and powerfully."

It's no surprise then that Bach, who wrote some of the greatest masterpieces of the Baroque era, also composed some of the most virtuosic and compelling music in the violin repertoire. Bach began to compose his solo sonatas and partitas for violin in 1703 and completed them in 1720, but they weren't published until 50 years after his death.

Even after they were published they didn't attract much attention until the renowned 19th century violinist Joseph Joachim began to perform them. Soon, violinists began to discover these gems, and now they are bedrock works in the violin repertoire. The violinist Henryk Szeryng wrote, "Johann Sebastian Bach's Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin belong undoubtedly to those masterworks of violin literature which every violinist should study thoroughly and come to grips with." Jascha Heifetz, Yehudi Menuhin, Nathan Milstein and many other violin greats have made superb recordings of them. Hilary Hahn's highly-acclaimed debut recording in 1997 was of the Bach sonatas and partitas. Adventurous violinists will always attempt to scale what George Enescu called "The Himalayas of violinists."

Bach wasn't the first the person to write solo music for violin. The earliest known published solo violin music is the six partitas composed by Johann Paul von Westhoff in 1696. Some consider Westhoff's music the inspiration for Bach's sonatas and partitas because Bach knew Westhoff for a couple of years when they were both at Dresden. Westhoff was the first composer we know of to bring polyphony and counterpoint to the solo violin.

Other composers from the late 17th and early 18th centuries who tried their hand at solo violin music include Heinrich Ignaz von Biber, Johann Joseph Vilsmayr, and Georg Philipp Telemann. But Bach's pieces are considered the pinnacle of violin virtuosity. They established the violin as a solo instrument and provided inspiration for composers like Eugène Ysaÿe and Béla Bartók to write their own brilliant music for violin.

Bach's partitas are like dance suites, overflowing with giges, gavottes and bourrées, while his sonatas are in the four-movement *sonata da chiesa* form. The second movement of every sonata is a fugue. Bach, the master of fugues, was able to write music for violin that could almost mimic the way harpsichords and organs can play chords. But the violinist has to be proficient at double-, triple-, and quadruple-stopping.

Bach's solo violin music has been compared to Shakespearean monologues. They are probing, introspective works that sound far ahead of their time. The intensity of Bach's violin music isn't for everyone, but neither is climbing the Himalayas.

– Notes by Patrick Neas

## HILARY HAHN, VIOLIN

■ Three-time Grammy Award-winning violinist Hilary Hahn melds expressive musicality and technical expertise with a diverse repertoire guided by artistic curiosity. Her barrier-breaking attitude towards classical music and commitment to sharing her experiences with a global community have made her a fan favorite. Hahn is a prolific recording artist and commissioner of new works, and her 23 feature recordings have received every critical prize in the international press. She is currently in the midst of her third year as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's first-ever Artist-in-Residence, and is Artist-in-Residence at the New York Philharmonic, Visiting Artist at The Juilliard School, and Curating Artist of the Dortmund Festival.

Hahn is a frequent commissioner and performer of works by living composers, and her 2023–24 repertoire includes several new and recent works by Barbara Assiginaak, Steven Banks, Jennifer Higdon, Jessie Montgomery, and Carlos Simon, among others. Hahn performs these alongside compositions by Mozart, Mendelssohn, Sibelius, Brahms, Prokofiev, Korngold, Ginastera, Sarasate, Barber, and Copland in concerts with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Colombian Youth Orchestra, the Israel, Los Angeles, and New York Philharmonics, and the Chicago, National, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestras.

In addition to her orchestral appearances, Hahn will give several solo recitals and small-ensemble performances this season. Beginning in September with a recital in Athens, GA, Hahn will perform three solo Bach recitals; other dates include an October performance in Kansas City, where she opens the 2023–24 Harriman-Jewell Series, and a March recital in New York as part of her residency with the New York Philharmonic. As Curating Artist of the Dortmund Festival, Hahn will perform a duo recital with organist Iveta Apkalna, join cellist Seth Parker Woods in a recital program as well as a performance of contemporary American repertoire

with London's Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective, perform Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, lead one of her signature "Bring Your Own Baby" concerts, and host a master class for violinists of all levels.

A strong advocate for new music, Hahn has championed works by a diverse array of contemporary composers, and has personally commissioned more than 40 composers to write works in a wide range of formats. Her 2021 recording *Paris* features the world premiere recording of Rautavaara's *Deux Sérénades*, a piece written for Hahn and which she premiered in 2019. Other recent commissions include Michael Abels's *Isolation Variation*, Hahn's recording of which was nominated for a Grammy; Barbara Assiginaak's *Sphynx Moth*; Lera Auerbach's Sonata No. 4: *Fractured Dreams*; and *6 Partitas* by Antón García Abril.

García Abril, Auerbach, and Rautavaara had been contributing composers for *In 27 Pieces: the Hilary Hahn Encores*, Hahn's Grammy Award-winning multi-year commissioning project.

Hahn has related to her fans naturally from the very beginning of her career. She has committed to signings after nearly every concert and maintains and shares a collection of the fan-art she has received over the course of 20 years. Her "Bring Your Own Baby" concerts create opportunities for parents of infants to share their enjoyment of live classical music with their children in a nurturing, welcoming environment. Hahn's commitment to her fans extends to a long history of educational outreach. Her social media-based practice initiative, #100daysofpractice, has transformed practice into a community-building celebration of artistic development; since Hahn created the hashtag in 2017, fellow performers and students have contributed nearly one million posts. A former Suzuki student, she released new recordings of the first three books of the Suzuki Violin School

in 2020. In 2019, she released a book of sheet music for *In 27 Pieces: the Hilary Hahn Encores*, which includes her own fingerings and bowings and performance notes for each work.

Hahn is a prolific and celebrated recording artist whose feature albums on Decca, Deutsche Grammophon, and Sony have all opened in the top ten of the *Billboard* charts. Her most recent album celebrates her artistic lineage with a recording of Ysaÿe's six sonatas for solo violin. Three of Hahn's albums—her 2003 Brahms and Stravinsky concerto disc, a 2008 pairing of Schoenberg and Sibelius concerti, and her 2013 recording of *In 27 Pieces: the Hilary Hahn Encores*—have been awarded Grammys. Jennifer Higdon's *Violin Concerto*, which was composed for Hahn and which she recorded in 2008, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize.

Hahn is the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions. In recent seasons, she was named *Musical America's Artist of the Year* for 2023, delivered the keynote speech of the Second Annual Women in Classical Music Symposium, received the 2021 Herbert von Karajan award, and was awarded the eleventh Annual Glasshütte Original Music Festival Award, which she donated to the Philadelphia-based music education nonprofit Project 440. Hahn was the 2022 Chubb Fellow at Yale University's Timothy Dwight College; she also holds honorary doctorates from Middlebury College—where she spent four summers in the total-immersion German, French, and Japanese language programs—and Ball State University, where there are three scholarships in her name.

Photo by Dana van Leeuwe



**Pick up a copy of Hilary Hahn's latest album (and a couple of our other favorites) in the lobby tonight!**

Hilary Hahn: *Eugene Ysaÿe Six Sonatas for Violin Solo, Op. 27* (2023)

Hilary Hahn: *Eclipse* Dvořák, Ginastera, Sarasate (2022)

*Hilary Hahn plays Bach Violin Sonatas Nos 1 & 2; Partita No. 1* (2018)

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