



ARTIST  
SERIES

**Sarah Chang, violin**  
**Julio Elizalde, piano**

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018

# Opus 3 Artists

presents

## Sarah Chang, violin Julio Elizalde, piano

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018

Exclusive Management for Sarah Chang:  
Opus 3 Artists  
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# Program

## Romanian Folk Dances, Sz. 56

- I. Joc cu bătă
- II. Brâul
- III. Pê-loc
- IV. Buciumeana
- V. Poargă românească
- VI. Mărunțel

Béla Bartók  
(1881-1945)

## Sonata No. 3 in D minor, Op. 108

- I. Allegro
- II. Adagio
- III. Un poco presto e con sentimento
- IV. Presto agitato

Johannes Brahms  
(1833-1897)

## Intermission

## Sonata in A Major, FWV 8

- I. Allegretto ben moderato
- II. Allegro
- III. Recitativo-Fantasia: Ben moderato
- IV. Allegretto poco mosso

César Franck  
(1822-1890)

# Program notes

By Marc Shulgold

## Romanian Folk Dances, Sz. 56

**Béla Bartók (1881-1945)**

Nationalism was sweeping through Europe at the start of the 20th century—a fervor that served as a main component leading to World War I. For Bartók, however, pride in his Hungarian homeland translated into a passion for its folk music—those honest, unschooled peasant songs and dances that represented the heart and soul of Hungary and surrounding countries.

At that time, not much was known about the songs and dances of small, inaccessible villages. So, Bartók became a folklorist and took to the road, fresh from his formal training at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest. Soon after graduating in 1903, he began traveling, dragging with him notebooks and a cumbersome wire recorder, convincing rural musicians to play or sing into his recording machine. Over the years, he accumulated 800 cylinders and more than 4,000 songs. Some of those melodies were later reworked into piano suites, though most of his collection simply inspired him to compose in the style of these folk melodies.

Along with his fellow folklorist/composer Zoltán Kodály, Bartók traveled all over Eastern Europe—even as far as Turkey and North Africa. His travels from 1910-12 in four regions of Transylvania (now part of central Romania), led to a set of eight folk dances. Completed in 1915 for solo piano, six of them were soon arranged for violin and piano by Bartók's dear friend Zoltán Székely (first violinist of the Hungarian String Quartet). Later, the composer recast them for orchestra. The six, played without break, are titled “Stick Dance,” “Sash Dance,” “In One Place,” “Horn Dance,” “Romanian Polka” and a final fast dance known as a “Mărunțel.” This charming collection of original miniatures forms an unbroken stream of melodies, rhythms and harmonies that stand in stark contrast from the stern, experimental music being composed elsewhere in Europe at the time.

Focused squarely on capturing the uninhibited flavor of nearby Romania, the composer did allow his fondness for French impressionist harmonies to appear in some of the dances. The musical language of Eastern European folk music became permanently imbedded in Bartók's works—present even in his final completed piece, the Concerto for Orchestra. For him, the blending of Eastern European folk music with the rules and structures taught in conservatories seemed natural. In a 1931 lecture, the composer stressed that concert hall music was “nothing but a frame placed around the essential element, the peasant melody, which takes its place there like a jewel in its setting.”

## Sonata No. 3 in D minor, Op. 108

**Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)**

Whenever summer arrived back in the late 1800s, many well-to-do Viennese escaped the heat and hustle of the city, traveling to the idyllic countryside for some peace and quiet and to commune with nature. Brahms was among them, although his time was hardly given to passively admiring mountains and rivers.

In fact, during the summer holidays of 1886-88, in the Swiss town of Hofstetten on the banks of Lake Thun 20 miles south of Bern, he wrote or began writing a number of major chamber works: the C minor piano trio, the second cello sonata, numerous songs and the last two of

his three violin sonatas. Earlier summers at other pastoral locales produced three of the four symphonies, the violin concerto, second piano concerto and other important orchestral works. That first summer in Thun saw the completion of the second violin sonata, Op. 100 and the beginnings of the following D minor sonata.

For whatever reason—most likely Brahms' extreme perfectionism—Op. 108 occupied him for the next two summers at Hofstetten. In fact, he “road tested” the sonata at soirées in the fall of 1888, soliciting the opinions of trusted friends. Perhaps buoyed by the positive response (Clara Schumann praised its warmth and emotional depth), Brahms finally submitted the sonata for publication, dedicating it to his longtime champion, the conductor and pianist Hans von Bülow.

Listening to this clearly constructed work, it seems puzzling that it would take so long for the composer to finish it. The only one of his sonatas not laid out in three movements, Op. 108 unfolds with an honesty and directness. Each of the four movements unveils its main melodic idea immediately, without a throat-clearing introduction: The *Allegro* builds around the violin's warm and simple opening motif; the following hymn-like *Adagio* avoids any touch of sugary sweetness or flowery decoration in offering one of Brahms' most endearing and heartfelt melodies; the playful syncopation of the third movement (labeled *Un poco presto e con sentimento*) finds the piano and violin chasing each other, never quite catching up until the final measure. Clara Schumann was particularly smitten with this movement, describing it in archly romantic terms: “Like a sweet girl toying charmingly with her lover, a flash of deep passion in the middle, and then flirting again.”

The restrained middle movements serve as a perfect set-up for the expansive, passionate outpourings of the final *Presto agitato*, music so big and orchestral that it's difficult to imagine Brahms would ever feel like tackling a fourth violin sonata. Here he places serious demands on both voices, particularly his keyboard player (perhaps with the virtuoso pianist and dedicatee Bülow in mind). A series of powerful chords at the dramatic beginning sets the tone for an anguished movement that finds only brief moments of relaxation.

## Sonata in A Major, FWV 8

**César Franck (1822-1890)**

As warm and ingratiating as this popular sonata is, the music can't hold a candle to the memorable circumstances of its creation and premiere. The Belgium-born composer wrote it in 1886 as a wedding present for his friend, Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe (1858-1931). The sonata was received on the morning of the ceremony, followed by a hurried rehearsal and a performance at the wedding breakfast.

Its public premiere took place later that year in a late afternoon concert at the Brussels Museum of Modern Painting—and what a legendary reading it turned out to be. Since the museum forbade any artificial lighting, the violinist and pianist Léontine Bordes-Pène charged into the Franck sonata as daylight faded. Confronted with near-darkness—and a thoroughly engaged audience—Ysaÿe grandly hit his music stand with the bow and ordered that the performance continue, though the players were all but invisible. The young composer Vincent D'Indy, one of Franck's students, observed of this magical occasion, “Music, wondrous and alone, held sovereign sway in the blackness of night.” (Didn't we tell you that the sonata couldn't hold a candle to its premiere?)

This work came in the midst of a flurry of important offerings, including the D minor symphony, string quartet and piano quintet—all penned when the composer was in his 60s and near the end of his life. It may seem odd that Franck didn't commit to writing music until 1875, when he was 55. Perhaps his reticence stemmed from the early failure in 1845 of his first major work,

the oratorio “Ruth.” (His youthful self-image had already been damaged by an overbearing father). Franck's middle years were happily spent teaching and serving as organist in several Paris churches. Though a late bloomer as a composer, he exerted a huge influence over D'Indy and other promising French musicians.

The Sonata in A Major served as a vivid example of “cyclical unity,” established earlier by Liszt, in which germs of melodic ideas are introduced and then return, explored and expanded, throughout the piece—a concept also featured in the D minor symphony. The quiet, unassuming phrase that begins the introductory *Allegretto* acts as a seed for ideas that will bloom in succeeding movements. The ensuing *Allegro* seems more like an opening movement in its energy and propulsiveness. The third movement, bearing the unusual heading *Recitativo-Fantasia*, opens with a violin solo, leading to the piano's recalling of the opening movement's dreamy melody. Franck ends his sonata with an inventive device, a strict canon, in which the violin chases the piano before the two switch roles.

## Biographies

### Sarah Chang, violin

Recognized as one of the foremost violinists of our time, Sarah Chang has performed with the most esteemed orchestras, conductors and accompanists in an international career spanning more than two decades. Since her debut with the New York Philharmonic at the age of 8, Chang has continued to impress audiences with her technical virtuosity and refined emotional depth.

Highlights from Chang's recent and upcoming seasons have included performances with North American orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, and the Boston, Montreal, Houston, Detroit, Toronto, Vancouver, Cincinnati, San Diego and New Jersey symphony orchestras. She has also performed at the Hollywood Bowl and at the Tanglewood, Ravinia and Aspen Music Festivals, among others. With a career that has blossomed internationally, her European engagements have taken her to Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, and her engagements in Asia have brought her to audiences in China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia and Singapore, along with Australia and New Zealand. As an accomplished recital and chamber musician, Chang regularly travels the world, performing with artists such as Pinchas Zukerman, Yefim Bronfman, Leif Ove Andsnes, Yo-Yo Ma, Isaac Stern, Wolfgang Sawallisch and members of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

Chang's most recent recording for EMI Classics—her 20th for the label—featured the Brahms and Bruch violin concertos with Kurt Masur and the Dresdner Philharmonie and was received to excellent critical and popular acclaim. Her recording of Vivaldi's Four Seasons attracted international commendation, with BBC Music Magazine stating, “She has never made a finer recording.” She has also recorded Prokofiev Violin Concerto No.1 and Shostakovich Violin Concerto No.1 live with the Berliner Philharmonic under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle; Fire and Ice, an album of popular shorter works for violin and orchestra with Plácido Domingo conducting the Berliner Philharmonic; the Dvořák Violin Concerto with the London Symphony Orchestra and Sir Colin Davis; as well as several chamber music and sonata discs with artists including pianists Leif Ove Andsnes and Lars Vogt.

Along with Pete Sampras, Wynton Marsalis and Tom Brady, Chang has been a featured artist in Movado's global advertising campaign “The Art of Time.” In 2006, Chang was honored as one

of 20 Top Women in Newsweek Magazine's "Women and Leadership: 20 Powerful Women Take Charge" issue. In March 2008, Chang was honored as a Young Global Leader for 2008 by the World Economic Forum (WEF) for her professional achievements, commitment to society and potential in shaping the future of the world.

In 2012, Sarah Chang received the Harvard University Leadership Award, and in 2005, Yale University dedicated a chair in Sprague Hall in her name. For the June 2004 Olympic games, she was given the honor of running with the Olympic Torch in New York, and that same month, became the youngest person ever to receive the Hollywood Bowl's Hall of Fame award. Also in 2004, Chang was awarded the Internazionale Accademia Musicale Chigiana Prize in Siena, Italy. Other previous distinctions include the Avery Fisher Career Grant, Gramophone's Young Artist of the Year award, Germany's Echo Schallplattenpreis, Newcomer of the Year honors at the International Classical Music Awards in London, and Korea's Nan Pa award. In 2011, Chang was named an official Artistic Ambassador by the United States Department of State.

## Julio Elizalde, piano

Praised as a musician of "compelling artistry and power" by the Seattle Times, the gifted American pianist Julio Elizalde is a multi-faceted artist who enjoys a versatile career as soloist, chamber musician, artistic administrator, educator and curator. He has performed in many of the major music centers throughout the United States, Europe, Asia and Latin America to popular and critical acclaim. Since 2014, he has served as the artistic director of the Olympic Music Festival near Seattle, Washington.

Elizalde has appeared with many of the leading artists of our time. He tours internationally with world-renowned violinists Sarah Chang and Ray Chen and has performed alongside conductors Itzhak Perlman, Teddy Abrams and Anne Manson. He has collaborated with artists such as violinist Pamela Frank, composers Osvaldo Golijov and Stephen Hough, baritone William Sharp and members of the Juilliard, Cleveland, Kronos and Brentano string quartets.

Elizalde is a founding member of the New Trio, with violinist Andrew Wan, the co-concertmaster of L'Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, and Patrick Jee, cellist of the New York Philharmonic. The New Trio was the winner of both the Fischhoff and Coleman National Chamber Music competitions and is the recipient of the Harvard Musical Association's prestigious Arthur W. Foote Prize. As part of the New Trio, Elizalde has performed for leading American politicians such as President Bill Clinton, secretaries of state Condoleezza Rice and Henry Kissinger, and the late senator Ted Kennedy. He was a featured performer for the soundtrack of the 2013 film *Jimmy P*, composed by Academy Award-winner Howard Shore.

Elizalde is a passionately active educator, having recently served as a visiting professor of piano at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington. Since 2011, he has been a member of the faculty at the Manchester Music Festival in Vermont and has given master classes at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Lawrence University and the Music Institute of Chicago. He has also appeared at various summer music festivals including Yellow Barn, Taos, Caramoor, Bowdoin, Kneisel Hall and the Music Academy of the West. Elizalde was a juror for the 2012 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition held at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana.

Originally from the San Francisco Bay Area, Elizalde received a Bachelor of Music degree with honors from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he studied with Paul Hersh. He holds master's and doctoral degrees from The Juilliard School in New York City, where he studied with Jerome Lowenthal, Joseph Kalichstein and Robert McDonald.

**Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram: @JulioThePianist**

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