

# Duo Parisienne

Nancy Bean, violin and viola                  Anne Sullivan, harp  
(augmented occasionally by Lloyd Smith, cello)

# The Program

## **“Souvenirs”**

FRANZ SCHUBERT	Serenade
SERGEY RACHMANINOV	Vocalise
J. S. BACH, arr. Sullivan	Impromptu Variations on “Break Forth O Beauteous Heavenly Light”
FRANTISEK DRDLA	Souvenir
CESAR CUI	Orientale
MAURICE RAVEL	Pi��ce en forme de Haba��era
RODOLPHE KREUTZER	Notturno No. 2

## INTERMISSION

# Sergey Rachmaninov (1873-1943) Vocalise

Written for soprano Antonina Nezhdanova, this lovely vocalise is the last of his Fourteen Songs, Op. 34. It has become one of the most popular miniatures ever written, and for good reason. Rachmaninov had a great gift for writing gloriously beautiful melodies: they appear in his piano concerti, in his string quartet, and in all of his songs. In this arrangement the question of which vowel to use while singing has been solved, and Nancy is using her remarkable Pellegrina viola to bring out the

sensual beauty of this piece.

**Franz Schubert**  
**(1797-1828)**

**Serenade**

One of the most difficult things in the world is to write a simple melody. Wonderful melody just poured forth from Schubert, and this little gem is testament to the greatness of his gift. Written in 1828, in the last year of his all-too-short life, it is the fourth song of his “Schwanengesang” (Swan Song). Originally entitled “Ständchen,” it is universally known in many instrumental arrangements as his “Serenade,” one of the best-loved songs of the hundreds he wrote. It is a wonder of simplicity and deepest poignancy. The Pellegrina viola is the perfect instrument to enhance the hauntingly lovely character of this miniature.

**J. S. Bach**  
**(1685-1750)**

**Impromptu Variations on  
“Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light”  
arr. Anne Sullivan**

This well-known Christmas chorale has found a unique setting, featuring the remarkable gift Anne Sullivan has for composing and arranging. In its original form it is a glowing tribute to the religious experience, but its simplicity and elegance lends itself superbly to a more free illumination of its lines.

**František Drdla**  
**(1869-1944)**

**Souvenir**

This is hands-down one of the most widely recognized and beloved pieces ever written. It is played (and attempted) by countless professionals, amateurs and students. Composed in an elegant folding together of Czech melody with Viennese late Romantic cliché in the *art nouveau* spirit of the time (the turn of the century), when played well it is a graceful and alluring little gem.

Drdla studied at the Prague Conservatory and later at the Vienna Conservatory and made a fine reputation as a concert violinist. He toured for six years throughout Europe and for three years in the U.S. (1923-25). His serious works, which included many operettas and a violin concerto, were overshadowed by his very popular salon works, of which this is the premiere example.

**Cesar Cui**  
**(1835-1918)**

**Orientale**

An unlikely avocation in music for a military general who was an expert in fortifications, Cui is now remembered primarily for his charming salon pieces. He wrote many serious operas, none of which were particularly successful, though his comic operas were better appreciated. “Orientale” is one of a handful of his delightful small works which have attained ongoing popularity.

**Maurice Ravel**  
**(1875-1937)**

**Pièce en Forme de Habañera**

This work, originally a vocalise (a vocal work without words), has been transcribed by many soloists because of its charm and intrigue. It has often been said that the best Hispanic music has come from French composers. This is one of those works which demonstrates why.

**Rodolphe Kreutzer**  
**(1766-1831)**

**Notturno No. 2**

Best known as the dedicatee of Beethoven’s ninth violin sonata, which he never played (calling it unplayable and incomprehensible), Kreutzer is not well known as a composer these days. He wrote forty operas, nineteen violin concerti and many etudes. Of German parentage, he was born in Versailles: his father was a musician in the royal chapel. He was one of the finest virtuoso violinists of his time and his violin method became one of the foundations of modern violin playing.

**Ludwig Spohr**  
**(1784-1859)**

**Sonata Concertante, Op. 114**

Ludwig (or Louis) Spohr has got to be one of the most underappreciated composers in all of Western music. He is the direct father of Wagner’s musical style in the use of through-composition and the use of leitmotifs (distinctive small groups of notes used to identify specific characters or characteristics). He was a fine craftsman and many of his experiments in chromaticism were seminal to later composers’ music.

One of the finest concert violinists of his time, Spohr’s approach to music

was adventurous, even daring at times. While not all of his experiments were successful, he has left us with an impressive body of operas, symphonies, concerti, chamber works. Some of his most delightful are his chamber works with harp, and this is a prime example. Filled with melody and inventive ideas, it is an absolute delight to hear. If you've never "met" Herr Spohr, this is the very best piece for your introduction to him.

**Giuseppe Tartini  
(1692-1770)**

**Sonata, "Didone Abbandonata"**

Studying music against his parents' wishes (they had predestined him for a monastic life), marrying in secret against the dictates of his order, Giuseppe Tartini made his difficult way to a life of music. The most celebrated violinist of his time, he had established a school for violin which became one of Europe's primary training grounds for aspiring violinists. His effusively dramatic approach to writing music made him a uniquely intriguing creative artist in what was musically a most conservative time.

The title of this sonata, given to it later, in the 19th century, probably arose from the music suggesting one of the many operas by that name, set by more than 50 composers to the first original libretto by Pietro Metastasio. The plot involved Dido, Queen of Carthage, who was in love with the renowned Trojan leader Aeneas and had at least one serious rival, her sister Selene, secretly also in love with Aeneas.

This sonata is dramatically charged. The opening movement sets the stage for tragedy; there is great emotional tension. The second movement is the most driven, galloping headlong to strongly emphatic cadences. The third movement, though slow, is decidedly dramatic. A more lyrical finale follows, promising relief but ending distinctly unresolved. The impact of this sonata is a prime example of Tartini's genius which makes him such a visionary composer.