

Form, Harmony, and Expression in the Violin Repertoire: Three Dissertation Recitals

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts
(Music: Performance)
in The University of Michigan
2026

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DEDICATION

For Professor Aaron Berofsky, my teacher and mentor, with gratitude and admiration.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is the result of many years of study, and it would not have been possible without the people who supported me along the way.

My deepest gratitude goes to my teacher, Professor Aaron Berofsky. His guidance has shaped not only these recitals but my entire growth as a violinist and musician. His artistry, his patience, and the care he brought to every lesson have been a constant source of inspiration, and the lessons I learned from him extend far beyond the violin. I count myself extraordinarily fortunate to have studied with him.

I am also sincerely grateful to the members of my dissertation committee—Professor James Joyce, Assistant Professor Fabiola Kim, Associate Professor René Rusch, and Assistant Professor Kathryn Votapek. Their generous time, thoughtful questions, and encouragement strengthened this work and enriched my musical thinking in ways I will carry forward.

My thanks go to my collaborative pianist, Jinzhao Xu, whose musicianship and partnership were essential to these recitals. Making music together has been one of the great joys of this degree.

Finally, I owe more than words can express to my family. Their unwavering love, faith, and support have sustained me through every stage of my studies. This achievement belongs to them as much as to me.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation comprises three violin recitals exploring landmark works of the violin repertoire. Each recital is documented here by its program and an accompanying set of program notes that examines the form, harmonic language, and performance challenges of the music presented.

The first recital surveys the French repertoire of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through three works: Ernest Chausson's *Poème*, op. 25, and the violin sonatas of César Franck and Claude Debussy. The Chausson and the Franck were both written for the violinist Eugène Ysaÿe, who shaped their early performance history. The accompanying notes trace the chromatic harmonic syntax these composers inherited from Wagner and Franck, the cyclic procedures that bind the Franck and Debussy sonatas, and the distinctively coloristic harmony of Debussy's late style.

The second recital pairs the solo violin music of J. S. Bach and Eugène Ysaÿe, presenting Bach's Solo Sonata no. 2 in A minor and the Ciaccona from the D minor Partita alongside Ysaÿe's Solo Sonatas no. 4 and no. 6. The notes consider the formal balance, contrapuntal writing, and spiritual depth of these monumental works, and reflect on the connections between two composers separated by two centuries.

The third recital is devoted to the violin sonatas of Ludwig van Beethoven, presenting the Sonata in E-flat major, op. 12 no. 3; the Sonata in C minor, op. 30 no. 2; and the Sonata in G major, op. 96. The notes examine how Beethoven worked within inherited Classical forms while steadily reshaping them, focusing on two procedures that recur across his career: the use of remote flat keys as the site of his most expressive writing, and the deliberate weakening and deferral of cadential resolution.

Taken together, the three recitals and their notes offer a study of how form, harmony, and expression operate across three centuries of music for the violin.

RECITAL 1

Recital 1 Program

School of Music, Theatre & Dance
University of Michigan

FIRST DISSERTATION RECITAL

Tianyu Liu, Violin

Jinzhao Xu, Piano

Monday, December 1, 2025
Moore Building, Britton Recital Hall
7:30 PM

Poème, op. 25 (1896)

Ernest Chausson
(1855–1899)

Sonata for Violin and Piano in G Minor (1917)

Claude Debussy
(1862–1918)

Allegro vivo
Intermède: Fantasque et léger
Finale: Très animé

Intermission

Sonata for Violin and Piano in A Major (1886)

César Franck
(1822–1890)

Allegretto ben moderato
Allegro
Ben moderato: Recitativo-Fantasia
Allegretto poco mosso

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Musical Arts

Recital 1 Program Notes

Chausson, *Poème*, op. 25

Ernest Chausson's *Poème* for violin and orchestra, op. 25 (1896), is among the most chromatically venturesome works in the late Romantic violin repertoire. Its surface is rhapsodic, and it is hard to name the form, but close reading shows that the piece is governed by a deliberate, large-scale plan.¹² The music proceeds as a network of recurring motives and themes, organized by a harmonic language that Chausson drew from Wagner and César Franck: one that prefers chromatic voice leading to harmony driven by root motion. This paper traces the formal layout, the development of the motivic material, and the harmonic method of the *Poème*, and gives particular attention to how Chausson manages the drama of the recapitulation and the return to the home key of E-flat minor.

The *Poème* does not settle into a single inherited form. Its design is best described as rhapsodic: it grows from a set of motives and themes that are continuously varied across the work rather than restated intact. Even so, a ternary, sonata-like outline can be traced through it—an exposition, a developmental middle section, and a recapitulation—all held within the governing tonal center of E-flat minor.

The principal motivic cell, referred to here as Motif 1, appears in the first three measures in the top voice of the orchestral reduction: the ascending figure B-flat–C-flat–E-flat. These three

¹In his 1894 reply to Ysaÿe's request for a violin piece, Chausson wrote that he already had in mind a work "of rather free construction, in which there would be numerous solo passages for the violin." Chausson to Eugène Ysaÿe, 1894, in Antoine Ysaÿe and Bertram Ratcliffe, *Ysaÿe: His Life, Work and Influence* (London: William Heinemann, 1947), 177, quoted in Yan Mao, "Ernest Chausson's *Poème*, op. 25 in Cultural Context" (DMA diss., University of Memphis, 2016), 20.

²The title reflects Chausson's admiration for the Russian writer Ivan Turgenev, whose prose poem "Le Chant de l'amour triomphant" (The Song of Triumphant Love, 1881) provided the direct inspiration for the work. Chausson and Turgenev moved in overlapping Parisian circles—both were intimate with the salon of Pauline Viardot—and Chausson's choice of the generic designation *poème* signals an aspiration toward literary, extra-musical expression. Turgenev's novella recounts a tale of transcendent, otherworldly love, and the work's atmosphere of yearning and unresolved longing—qualities that permeate Chausson's harmonic language throughout—can be heard as a musical counterpart to that narrative. See Mao, "Ernest Chausson's *Poème*, op. 25 in Cultural Context," 24–26.

notes carry an unusual amount of the work's later material. The figure serves at once as a structural marker and a recurring expressive sign: its returns mark off the formal sections and announce the principal dramatic events, in the manner of a Wagnerian leitmotif within a continuous musical narrative.

The introduction lays out the harmonic and melodic vocabulary of the piece before the violin enters. Following the opening statement of Motif 1, and a passage that foreshadows many harmonic and melodic ideas the piece will revisit later, the orchestra states Motif 1 again to prepare the entrance of the soloist.³

The violin's presentation of Theme 1 at measure 34 is notable for one specific reason: the violin enters unaccompanied and states the theme before the orchestra has had the chance to do so. This reverses the usual concerto procedure, in which the orchestra introduces thematic material and the soloist answers with it afterward. Here, the violin takes the role of principal narrator and the orchestra that of commentator. The reversal is more than a surface effect: it establishes a dramatic premise in which the violin's line carries the emotional argument of the work.

The violin ends its opening solo with a statement of Motif 1 at measure 50, and the orchestra then takes up Theme 1 with harmonic accompaniment. The violin re-enters with an embellished version of Motif 1 at bar 65, and follows it with an ornamented version of Theme 1 (measure 77); this version intensifies into a passage of strained, tragic virtuosity (measure 83). The orchestra restates Motif 1 at measure 90, and the violin closes the section with a trill and a scale passage that traces the arpeggio figure from the start of Theme 1.

One feature of this opening section deserves emphasis: its improvisatory surface is supported by strict motivic development. Despite the free, rhapsodic manner of the writing, almost everything in the section is derived from Motif 1 and Theme 1. The sense of freedom is produced from very little material; the underlying construction is tightly controlled.

³Yan Mao identifies this introductory passage as consisting of two melodic ideas—the introductory material and a D pentatonic-scale idea—the latter returning near the end of the work to round out the form. Mao, “Ernest Chausson’s *Poème*, op. 25 in Cultural Context,” 42–45.

A transitional passage in E-flat major begins at the *Animato* (measure 97). It turns the prevailing minor toward the parallel major and prepares the arrival of Theme 2, which the orchestra introduces at measure 105. The violin takes up Theme 2 at bar 113, and the music moves toward the third and last of the exposition's principal themes.

The violin introduces Theme 3 at measure 123, in C minor—a key a major third below E-flat minor, a relationship that again reflects the chromatic harmonic syntax of the piece. The orchestra states Theme 3 at measure 138, which frees the violin for virtuosic embellishing figures. As the passage moves toward what appears to be a cadential close in C minor, the violin grows more agitated, breaks away from the key at bar 146, and drives the music into G minor (measure 152).

The development (measure 152–197) works mainly in G minor and C minor and draws entirely on material from Theme 3. It begins by echoing the violin's closing outbursts from measure 146 and lingers on dominant-function harmonies (D chords). The violin enters with a turbulent double-stop passage that builds to a forceful restatement of Theme 3 at measure 180. A brief move to C major (measure 188), quickly abandoned, hints at a possible resolution before the music falls back into C minor.

The recapitulation is the most distinctive part of the *Poème*, and it is here that Chausson's procedure departs most clearly from that of his Classical predecessors. Rather than turning toward E-flat minor to supply a conventional tonal resolution, the recapitulation moves systematically *away* from the home key and only then makes its return.

The recapitulation is announced by the return of Motif 1, now in C minor (measure 198). The violin enters at bar 204 with Motif 1 in the original key of E-flat minor, which briefly suggests a conventional return, but the music is almost at once diverted into G-flat minor. Theme 1 then returns at bar 206—not in E-flat minor, but in the remote key of G-flat minor. The violin interrupts at bar 214, modulates upward by a major third to B minor, and states Theme 1 again at 225 in that key.

At this point B minor stands at the greatest tonal distance from E-flat minor in the whole piece: the two keys are a tritone apart. The listener is therefore held in suspense. The thematic

material of the recapitulation has been laid out, but in keys foreign to the tonic, and no clear harmonic route back to E-flat minor has been offered. Chausson is raising the dramatic stakes on purpose, so that the eventual return to E-flat minor will register as the resolution of an extended tension.

A short return of Theme 2 in B major (measure 240) works mainly as a transition into the recapitulation of Theme 3. The violin presents Theme 3 from measure 246, in a key that points to G-sharp minor—another step away from E-flat minor. The theme breaks off and modulates to E minor, where a turbulent recapitulation of Theme 3 begins at measure 255.

The sequence continues. Theme 3 appears again in F-sharp minor at bar 263, moving still farther from the tonic. A virtuosic passage (273–282) works the music back to E minor. There the orchestra gives a partial statement of Theme 1 at 283—interrupted by the violin entering with Theme 3 material (measure 285)—before the texture dissolves into another arpeggiated passage. By this stage, the recapitulation has passed through G-flat minor, B minor, G-sharp minor, E minor, and F-sharp minor without once touching E-flat minor. The harmonic distance covered is considerable, and the home key has been withheld throughout.

The climax of the work arrives at measure 301, with the long-withheld return of Theme 1 in E-flat minor. The preparation for this moment is among the most precisely constructed passages in the piece. While the violin ascends in virtuosic arpeggios, the orchestra carries out a descending chromatic sequence of diminished chords in the bass: A-sharp diminished (295), G-sharp diminished (297), G diminished (298), F-sharp diminished, and E diminished (299). The bass reaches D natural at measure 300, beneath an E diminished chord.

The E-flat chord that begins Theme 1 in the following measure is not prepared by a dominant. It is the result of chromatic voice leading: the D in the bass rises a half-step to E-flat, while the G natural falls a half-step to G-flat. This stepwise motion, which does not behave like a traditional cadence, nonetheless delivers the point of arrival. The tonic is reached, but by voice leading rather than by functional progression.

The larger harmonic motion into the climax is itself a descending half-step: from a sustained emphasis on E minor down to E-flat minor. This relationship is not incidental. Chausson

has built the latter part of the recapitulation so that the final approach to the home key is by falling semitone, not by the ascending fifth of Classical practice. The result is consistent with the chromatic logic of the rest of the work, and at the same time, it carries the full dramatic weight that the long withholding of the tonic has accumulated.

The orchestra delivers the recapitulation of the first half of Theme 1, and the violin completes the theme at measure 306. Motif 1 returns once more at bar 313, as if to confirm the resolution.

The coda (317 to the end) is a final, subdued reflection on the material of the piece. A turn toward E-flat *major* appears briefly at 317 and lightens the texture for a moment, but it gives way again to E-flat minor by measure 324. Motif 1 makes its last appearance at 329, closing the work with the same gesture that opened it.

The harmonic language of the *Poème* is fundamentally chromatic, in the line of Wagner and César Franck. Chausson largely sets aside root motion by fifth—the mechanism of Classical harmonic syntax—in favor of voice leading by semitone. Harmonies tend not to progress through functional relationships of tonic, subdominant, and dominant; instead one chord dissolves into the next through small, often minimal, motion in the individual voices.

This method is at work throughout the piece: in the fluid modulations of the exposition, in the passage through several keys during the recapitulation, and most clearly at the climactic return to E-flat minor, where a descending chromatic bass line, rather than a dominant, produces the arrival of the tonic. The scarcity of strong perfect cadences—especially at the structurally decisive moments—is one of the defining traits of Chausson's style here, and it accounts for the work's continuous sense of harmonic flux and unresolved longing.

Chausson's *Poème* is a work of real formal and harmonic sophistication.⁴ Its rhapsodic surface rests on a carefully organized structure, and its most characteristic formal device—the

⁴Reviewing a performance in January 1913, Debussy praised the work, observing that its “freedom of form never inhibits a natural sense of proportion.” Claude Debussy, “Notes on the Month’s Concerts,” in *Debussy on Music: The Critical Writings of the Great French Composer Claude Debussy*, collected and introduced by François Lesure, trans. and ed. Richard Langham Smith (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 275.

systematic avoidance of the tonic in the recapitulation—produces a dramatic tension that the climactic return to E-flat minor then resolves. Its harmonic language, indebted to Wagner and Franck, shows how chromatic voice leading can take the place of functional harmony as the organizing principle of large-scale form. In this respect, the *Poème* holds an important position in the late Romantic tradition, pointing toward a harmonic world in which the pull of the tonic is felt not through the predictable mechanics of the Classical cadence, but through the more gradual and expressive logic of the half-step.⁵

Franck, Violin Sonata in A Major

Franck's Violin Sonata in A major is one of the most frequently performed and admired works in the violin repertoire. It is demanding for the violinist, but it also asks a great deal of the pianist, and it has been transcribed for a number of other instruments, among them flute and cello. Like Chausson's *Poème*, the sonata is dedicated to Eugène Ysaÿe, and it was given to him as a wedding present. Ysaÿe and his bride received the score on the morning of the wedding; they rehearsed it briefly before performing it at the ceremony. The sonata as a whole is cyclic: Franck carries shared thematic material across all four movements and transforms it in each.

The first movement, *Allegretto ben moderato*, is in sonata form, though it has no development section. It functions, in effect, as an extended introduction to the second movement. The first four measures form a short introduction: the piano sets out an ascending arpeggiated gesture in each measure, and the 9/8 meter gives the music its lilting motion, over a simple V–I–V–I harmony. The violin enters *molto dolce* at measure 5 with an arpeggiated figure of its own. A new melody with a repeated descending gesture arrives at measure 9, and it returns later in C-sharp major, the first beat now an ascending gesture. The harmony at this point is markedly chromatic. The third beat of measure 11 would, by simple spelling, be an A major chord, but Franck respells

⁵Not all readings place the work in the late Romantic tradition. Yan Mao argues that the *Poème* is best understood as an impressionist work, citing its non-functional harmony, ambiguous tonality, and exotic coloring; she reads the same harmonic features discussed here as marks of an impressionist rather than a late Romantic style. Mao, “Ernest Chausson’s *Poème*, op. 25 in Cultural Context,” 80–82.

it, changing the G to F-double-sharp; this produces a smooth chromatic line to the G-sharp on the downbeat of measure 12, where the three other voices descend chromatically to a G-sharp major chord, which in turn leads to the C-sharp major passage. Measure 16 uses the same procedure to shift to E major, and the same chromatic approach to modulation can be heard again at measures 20–21. The first theme returns at measure 25, in B major; a *molto crescendo* begins at measure 28 and leads toward the secondary theme. That crescendo reaches the first fortissimo of the movement, a B major ninth chord, which then resolves to E major—a moment of release after the extended, dreamlike first theme. The secondary theme is given entirely to the piano. It abandons the lilting rhythm and moves largely in dotted quarter notes and running eighth notes. From measure 39 the piano's left hand changes to a moving sixteenth-note accompaniment, which makes the theme more urgent and more continuous. The connecting section begins at measure 51, where the gesture of the first theme returns and prepares the recapitulation. The recapitulation follows the exposition closely, with the secondary theme now returning in A major, as the conventions of sonata form would lead one to expect.

The second movement is in sonata form and in D minor. The piano sets out the theme in rapidly moving sixteenth notes, with the melody placed in the middle voice—a passage that is demanding for the pianist both technically and musically. The violin restates the theme at measure 14; its offbeat entry makes the restatement sound like an interruption. The violin line keeps rising and is itself highly chromatic. Its highest note, the D, is to be taken on the G string, which is difficult to manage: the player must keep the note in tune and at the same time guard the sound quality against excessive bow pressure. After this turbulent passage, the piano introduces a new melody at measure 24, and the contrary motion between the bass and the soprano at measure 28 is particularly expressive. The secondary theme arrives at measure 48, in F major, the relative major of D minor, again as sonata form would lead one to expect. It is a four-bar phrase, and the second phrase modulates to A major; the theme is more cheerful in character. The development begins at measure 80 and falls into three sections. The first is a recitative-like passage, which may anticipate the following movement; the G major chord in the second half of measure 82 does not resolve as expected but moves chromatically to an E diminished seventh chord, while the violin plays a

sighing descending half-step that gives the passage its mournful quality. The second section, measures 109–122, works mainly with material from the first theme and modulates to C-sharp minor and then to G-sharp minor. The third section, measures 123–136, draws on the secondary theme, with the roles of the two instruments exchanged: the violin takes the accompaniment and the piano carries the melody. After a series of dominant chords from measures 131 to 137, the recapitulation arrives at measure 138 in D minor. One unusual feature of the recapitulation is that the secondary theme is not placed in the home key, as sonata form would normally require; it appears in G major and shifts to F-sharp major. The opening of the coda is the darkest moment of the movement: a long tonic prolongation over which the violin repeats four notes, A–B-flat–C–D, with an alternating C-sharp, as if rising from the lowest point of the movement toward the relief of the major mode. A long *accelerando* begins at measure 206, with violin and piano playing rapid sixteenth notes in constant chromaticism. The movement ends in D major—the conclusion of an extended transformation from minor to major that has the character of a hard-won arrival.

The third movement is titled *Recitativo-Fantasia*, and it is among the most rhapsodic and freely imagined parts of the sonata. It should be played *attacca*, with the gap between the second and third movements kept to a minimum: the D major chord that ends the second movement is also the chord that opens the third, though the energy of that chord is now altered. The violin enters with a strong trill on the fourth beat at measure 4. Because the fourth beat is the weakest in cut time, this strong entrance unsettles the listener's sense of the beat and contributes to the fantasia character of the movement. At measure 11 the piano introduces a melody adapted from the first movement, here more chromatic in its harmony. The alto voice in the last two beats of measure 12 through measure 13 traces a chromatic line that moves from an A major seventh chord to an A-sharp diminished seventh chord and then to an E minor chord. The violin imitates the arpeggiated figure, in the manner of a question posed and left open. At measure 35 the piano alone carries a long descending chromatic line while the violin plays moving sixteenth notes; the harmony continues to move chromatically through this section, producing a wandering, dreamlike atmosphere. Franck then uses a G-sharp major chord to bring the music to a climax, where it reaches A major. The same phrase is repeated three times, ascending by chromatic half-steps from

A to B-flat to B; the third statement is the grandest, marked triple forte. The music then shifts abruptly to a pianissimo passage in F-sharp major. The material of measures 59 to 88 will be used cyclically in the final movement. The theme from the first movement returns at measure 93, in F-sharp major, and the movement ends in F-sharp minor; the descending line of the last six measures is the most despairing passage of the movement.

The last movement is a love duet cast as a canon, and it is in sonata-rondo form. The recurring first theme is what gives the movement its rondo character. It is set in the home key of A major. After the dark and painful world of the two preceding movements, the finale stands in sharp contrast: it is full of joy, celebration, and warmth, and it reads more clearly as a wedding gift. The first theme is introduced by the piano with a pick-up gesture, and the violin imitates it a measure later, so that the two instruments form a canon. The harmony here is far more diatonic, another marked contrast to the dense chromaticism of the middle movements. Two details of this opening passage are worth noting. Franck deliberately avoids the cadence at measure 5: the dominant moves to VI rather than to I, producing a deceptive cadence; rather than resolving the leading tone up to A, he lets it descend to F-sharp, which keeps the music in motion. At measure 11 the music arrives at another deceptive cadence, which again allows the canon to continue. Material from the third movement returns at measure 38: it appeared earlier in B minor and is now in D major, the relative major. Franck's reuse of thematic material to link the movements is what makes the sonata cyclic. As Vincent d'Indy, Franck's pupil, observed, "Taking up the art of construction precisely where Beethoven left it, he created what we now call the cyclic style."⁶ This theme becomes the secondary theme of the finale, and its character changes considerably. In the third movement it was meditative—calm and still, supported by a moving arpeggiated figure—but in the finale it becomes a warm song, with the violin accompanying in moving eighth notes, as if dancing around the line. The first theme returns at measure 52, where the violin begins the canon, now in C-sharp major. Because the first theme returns many times in this movement, and largely

⁶Vincent d'Indy, *César Franck: A Translation from the French of Vincent d'Indy*, trans. Rosa Newmarch (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1910), 91.

in different keys, the performer must give it a distinct character at each return, in keeping with the change of key. A closing passage of the exposition arrives at measure 87; this material is also used in the coda, and it is bright and celebratory. The development begins at measure 99 with a buoyant new idea not heard before. The first theme returns at measure 117 in D-flat major, a key far removed from the home key of A major. After a long crescendo from measure 130, the music shifts to F-sharp major at measure 143. The piano solo of measures 133–142 is first-theme material, now broken into segments; the modulation is achieved chromatically, moving from a D diminished seventh chord to a D-sharp minor chord, and the same procedure recurs at measures 148–149. This more forceful material is itself drawn from the third movement. The tension is released at measure 170, when the secondary theme arrives in C major. The final return of the first theme, at measure 185, also marks the recapitulation; Franck marks it *molto dolce*, and it is the most tender and inward statement of the theme, almost a recollection. The music ends with a festive coda, drawn from the exposition but now placed in the home key of A major.

Franck's Violin Sonata is structurally effective above all through its cyclic use of material across the four movements. That shared material links the movements while still allowing each to keep a clearly distinct character and mood. The harmonic language is not that of traditional functional harmony but rests largely on extended chromaticism—a procedure characteristic of the late Romantic era, and particularly of Wagner's music.

Debussy, Violin Sonata in G Minor

Debussy's Violin Sonata in G minor was written in 1917 and was the last major work he completed. It is one of the most frequently performed of the French violin sonatas, and, like Franck's sonata, it makes use of cyclic elements. Its harmonic language, however, is quite different from that of Franck's sonata or Chausson's *Poème*. Traditional functional harmony is far less important here; Debussy is concerned less with using harmony to give direction to a phrase than with the color of each harmony in itself. This is the approach usually called impressionism—though Debussy himself rejected the term, regarding it as a label that confined him and prevented him from moving beyond it.

The opening of the first movement already presents a distinct and highly colored sound world. The piano begins with a sustained G minor chord and then moves to a C major chord, the major IV in G minor. The color of that major IV is striking—like a sudden ray of light, and suggestive of hope—and the slur across the first four bars gives the opening its dreamlike quality. The emphasis on the IV chord is important throughout the entire sonata, and it carries more weight than the dominant V. The violin enters with a syncopated rhythm that outlines the G minor chord, and the piano repeats the opening harmony. These eight bars function as a short introduction, and the first theme begins at measure 9. At measure 10, the first dominant chord appears, a D major ninth chord; it resolves correctly to G minor, but it does not register as a cadence, because it falls on the second beat, a weak beat in 3/4 time, and then proceeds again to the IV chord in the next measure. From measure 18 the music is marked *en serrant*, indicating a tightening of the tempo. The violin repeats an arch-shaped figure while the piano introduces further chords beneath it. The secondary theme begins at measure 24: the violin holds the leading tone F-sharp while the piano introduces a chord built from a whole-tone scale, which produces a dreamlike, near-atonal atmosphere; the violin then outlines material that also comes from the whole-tone scale, and this material is treated buoyantly through the rest of the exposition. The climax of the exposition is at measure 56, drawn from the earlier *en serrant* material: the piano plays a full G minor chord and moves to a B minor chord, the change of chord approached chromatically so as to set one color against another. The piano then sustains a long pedal on G, the right hand playing descending chords, and this leads into the development at measure 64. The syncopated rhythms in the piano's right hand are derived from the violin's opening rhythm. After a long, repeated sighing gesture in the violin, the music moves to a lighter, warmer E major at measure 84. While the piano plays the arpeggiated E major chord, the violin begins a new melody at measure 88; this melody appears to be built on the C-sharp natural minor scale, the relative minor of E major. Debussy marks it *sur la touche*, indicating that it should be played over the fingerboard, which gives it a shimmering, indistinct quality. The piano then begins another arpeggiated figure, but one without the third of the chord—eight measures of parallel fifths, which heighten the sense of emptiness and desolation. The violin later restates the scale material, this time in the C Lydian scale; this section should be

played with a degree of rhythmic freedom, the intervals not strictly even but slightly varied. The piano holds the parallel fifths for a long stretch, until the recapitulation at measure 160, where the piano takes the melody and the violin imitates four measures later. The coda is also worth noting: the final climax at measure 249 arrives again on the major IV chord, now full of energy and brilliance, with the violin singing continuously and adding further color through its emphasis on the A-flat, the flat II in G minor.

The second movement is titled *Intermède: fantasque et léger*. It is set in G major and is, in effect, in rondo form. Its character is light, scherzando, and playful. The violin opens the movement with two large leaps, each with its own crescendo, and then decays rapidly into a quasi-cadenza passage of arpeggiated string-crossing figures. The changes of tempo are abrupt, and the dynamics shift quickly: Debussy writes *p*, *più p*, and *pp* in successive measures, and the performer must make those distinctions audible. The first theme is introduced at measure 19; it is light and mischievous in character. The most exotic and sensuous section begins at measure 60, where the violin part includes many large glissandos, each of which should be given a different character. At measure 72 violin and piano present a new melody together, marked *expressif et sans rigueur*—expressive and free; this melody is approached through many chromatic passing notes, which add tension and friction between the phrases, while the continuous light dotted sixteenth notes hold the texture together. In the last six measures of the movement the harmony arrives at the C major chord and then settles in G major. This ending mirrors the opening of the first movement, with the harmonic motion reversed.

The last movement contains many returns of earlier thematic material, which makes it cyclic in nature. After a shimmering, fast introduction in the piano, the violin enters with the first theme of the first movement, again marked *sur la touche*, which gives the return a remote, recollective quality, like an old memory. The tonal center is unclear at this point, because the piano sounds only G across three octaves. G major is reached at measure 29, which is also the entrance of the first theme of this movement. This theme is reminiscent of the second movement of Debussy's *La Mer*: the rapid string-crossing figures and running sixteenth notes suggest small waves. The chief difficulties for the violinist in this passage are the wide range of dynamics and

the quick changes of articulation. A sensuous, expressive slow passage arrives at measure 85, in B minor; its chromatic notes and glissandos recall the comparable passage in the second movement, and the contrary motion between the violin and the piano is especially expressive. The first-movement rhythm of the first theme returns at two further points, at measures 106–107 and at measures 120–121. The change at measure 154 is a quasi-recapitulation of this movement's first theme: the piano's right hand plays an augmented version of the first theme while the violin accompanies in staccato. The coda begins at measure 182, with the piano holding a long ostinato—F–E–D-sharp–E—while the violin restates the wave-like material above it. At measure 204 the music reaches its climax, where the C major chord returns once more: the final recall of the opening harmony of the first movement. After the C major chord is sounded four times, the music comes to rest in G major.

RECITAL 2

Recital 2 Program

School of Music, Theatre & Dance
University of Michigan

SECOND DISSERTATION RECITAL

Tianyu Liu, Violin

*Tuesday, March 24, 2026
Moore Building, Britton Recital Hall
7:30 PM*

Solo Sonata no. 2 in A Minor, BWV 1003 (1720)

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)

*Grave
Fuga
Andante
Allegro*

Solo Sonata no. 6 in E Major, op. 27 (1923)

Eugène Ysaÿe
(1858–1931)

Intermission

Solo Partita no. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1004 (1720)
Ciaccona

Johann Sebastian Bach

Solo Sonata no. 4 in E Minor, op. 27 (1923)

Eugène Ysaÿe

*Allemanda
Sarabande
Finale*

*Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Musical Arts*

Recital 2 Program Notes

My second DMA dissertation recital program is based on solo violin sonatas by J. S. Bach and Eugène Ysaÿe, including the A minor solo sonata and the Ciaccona from the D minor partita by J. S. Bach, and solo sonatas no. 4 and no. 6 by Eugène Ysaÿe. These works are monumental in the solo violin repertoire. Ysaÿe's solo violin sonatas were inspired largely by J. S. Bach, and the two composers share many similarities in compositional writing and spiritual quality. It is therefore meaningful to present these works together in my recital and to reflect on the connections between two composers from entirely different eras.

J. S. Bach, Solo Sonata no. 2 in A Minor, BWV 1003

The first piece on my program is the A minor solo sonata by J. S. Bach. It consists of four movements: Grave, Fugue, Andante, and Allegro. Each movement has its own unique character.

The Grave is a through-composed movement with an improvisatory quality, similar to the opening Adagio from Bach's G minor violin sonata. It opens with a dramatic gesture: an A minor chord followed by a low G that swiftly climbs up to the F on the E string. It is remarkable that the opening three notes span nearly the entire range of the violin. Bach's music is written in multiple voices—polyphony—and it is challenging to bring out different colors for each voice on the violin. What is important to recognize is that Bach is creating drama both technically and musically from the very first measure. He also employs many dissonances and diminished chords throughout this movement, such as on the fourth beat of measure 2, which interrupts a resolution that arrived two measures earlier. The G-sharp diminished chord pulls us back into the darkness. Starting from the second half of measure 4, the music gradually moves toward C major through a series of G major chords, which function as V of C. After the sequential material in the second half of measure 5, it finally arrives at the D dominant chord, which cadences on a cadential 6/4 in C major.

Bach does not stay in C major; the music almost instantly shifts back to A minor. This next section resembles a development in character, with modulation and constant harmonic tension. The most striking moment is the downbeat of measure 11—the tritone—which leads to a cadence in E. Later, arpeggiated diminished chords in measures 14 and 15 seem to push the music further from the home key of A minor. The rest of the movement never returns to an authentic cadence in A minor, except for a brief arrival on A in the middle voice at the downbeat of measure 20. The ending is equally dramatic: a half cadence hanging on the dominant E. From a performer's perspective, that final E should not decay too quickly but should be sustained as long as possible, creating a sense of unresolved tension that leads directly into the Fugue.

The Fugue opens with an upbeat gesture, as if inviting the listener to dance—and indeed, this fugue has a distinct dance quality. As Joel Lester observes of this fugue, the opening measures introduce three ideas—the subject, the episodic figure, and a chromatic-scale counterpoint—and these “intertwine in increasingly complex ways, and each idea appears inverted after m. 125, with frequent references to earlier passages.”⁷ The subject is two measures long, ending on the downbeat of measure 3, which allows the answer to begin on the same upbeat gesture. The remaining subject entries follow this same shape. It is worth noting that in measures 18–29, the shortened subject is invertible. At measure 38, the subject grows into a full-fledged version and modulates to A major, leading into the first episode, which features many forte-piano pairs—the so-called echoing effect Bach uses so often in his solo violin writing. The fugue subject reappears at measure 61, this time in E minor, with the main voice placed in the soprano register. Bach deliberately shifts the subject to different registers throughout, and performers must highlight those changes, using varied tonal colors to distinguish each entry. The next section is a longer episode spanning measures 94–124, full of sequential material and abbreviated subject fragments. After this extended episode, the subject returns at measure 125 in the alto voice, and the second half of the subject is now slurred in eighth notes, which creates a sighing gesture through its descending

⁷Joel Lester, *Bach's Works for Solo Violin: Style, Structure, Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 75.

intervals. Episode 3 begins at measure 166, and the subject returns at measure 189—but this time without a following answer. Instead, it continues through successive developmental materials, which I believe serves as a buildup toward the climax of the fugue. The sequential material keeps pushing upward and intensifying harmonically. Yet Bach pulls back just as it reaches its highest point at measure 202, steering into yet another episode. The ending of this fugue is quite striking: the subject's last appearance is at measure 280, in the home key of A minor—but after a virtuosic fast passage, it cadences in A major, with a Picardy third, the C sharp could be heard as the $\hat{3}$ borrowed from the parallel major mode. To me, the fugue carries many struggles and hardships, and that final cadence in A major feels like a release from all the accumulated dissonance.

The third movement is the Andante. “Andante” means “walking” or “walking pace” in Italian. The entire movement flows in steady eighth notes, almost like a calm heartbeat, evoking a solitary figure wandering alone. In my opinion, this piece reflects Bach's profound loneliness. Since Bach just lost his wife when he started composing the Solo Violin Sonatas. It is in binary form and in C major. The A section is 11 measures long and is repeated. The climax arrives at measure 7, where Bach uses double-stops, three-note chords, and four-note chords to gradually build intensity, almost like a natural crescendo. After the V7 chord, it lands on an imperfect authentic cadence at measure 8, allowing the music to keep flowing. At the second ending, it settles on the dominant G, which seamlessly connects into the B section. The B section is more adventurous and harmonically tense. For example, the D-sharp diminished chord at measure 17 and the suspended C in the soprano voice create a painful dissonance. The climax of the B section, in my view, falls at measure 19—the resolution to E minor, with a 9-8 (“2-1”) suspension. That major second dissonance is extremely raw. The music then returns to C major and concludes with a perfect authentic cadence.

The last movement, Allegro, is the traditional fast finale of Bach's solo sonata. It is also in binary form: the A section is 24 measures long and the B section is 33 measures, both repeated. The entire movement is driven by fast 16th notes and occasional ornamental 32nd notes. As a performer, it is important to convey the differences in color and harmony even within the single-note passages, without the aid of double-stops or chords. My approach is to treat arpeggiated notes

as a single unit—giving them a phrase shape rather than playing them as separate individual notes. Different articulations are also essential for expression here: the brush stroke suits the heavier forte sections, while a released spiccato fits the lighter piano passages. Of course, all bow choices should respond to the underlying harmonic movement. The A section is in A minor and modulates to E minor at its close, while the B section begins in E minor and returns to A minor.

Eugène Ysaÿe, Solo Sonata no. 6 in E Major, op. 27

The second piece on my program is the Solo Sonata no. 6, op. 27 by Eugène Ysaÿe. This piece is in E major, the dominant of A, corresponding to the preceding A minor sonata by Bach. Each of Ysaÿe's sonatas is dedicated to one of the most prominent violinists of his time, and no. 6 is dedicated to the Spanish violinist Manuel Quiroga—who, interestingly, never performed it. Quiroga was a celebrated violinist and composer, often described as the finest successor to the great Spanish violinist-composer Pablo de Sarasate. Accordingly, this sonata is technically demanding and deeply rooted in the Spanish habanera style. As Bertram Greenspan observes, "It is possible that Ysaÿe, reaching that last of the Six Sonatas which he hoped would update the association of violin technique and musical practices, called upon all of the technical devices he had neglected to use in the previous sonatas."⁸

The time signature is an unusual 2/8, and the tempo is fast. The opening 27 measures form an introduction that begins with an upbeat gesture featuring trills and three large chords, two of which are five-note chords—a rarity before Ysaÿe. Each five-note chord is divided into two parts (three plus two), though it should still be played as a single chord; this technique expands what is possible on the violin and achieves a grander effect. After an extremely virtuosic passage full of double-stops and octaves, the habanera rhythm arrives at measure 13. This rhythm is the essential thread of the entire piece, recurring as a motif that connects each section. The off-beat sforzandos

⁸Bertram Greenspan, "The Six Sonatas for Unaccompanied Violin and Musical Legacy of Eugène Ysaÿe; The Sextets by Brahms: An Analysis" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1969), 116.

beginning at measure 14 are another striking feature, driving the 32nd notes forward with a strong impulse. Another important technique appears at the end of measure 26, where the first note of a long slur should be played with most of the bow—a gesture that runs counter to traditional bow distribution, yet creates an extravagant, virtuosic effect that astonishes the audience. The first theme arrives with an upbeat to measure 28, again in habanera rhythm. In contrast to the fierce, fiery opening, Ysaÿe marks this theme *calmato*, and the dotted rhythm drifts and wanders, as if rocking in a gentle breeze. The section contains many descending gestures, such as the dotted notes over a long slur at measures 39 and 44, and the long descending octaves in measures 47–48, creating a dreamy, almost phantasmagoric effect—and building toward the climax at measure 72. That climax returns to the habanera’s dotted rhythm and proceeds through a chain of dominant chords, resolving to E minor at measure 76. The off-beat *sforzando* figure then returns, more elaborate this time with intricate double-stops and octaves. The down-bow staccato in measures 84 and 85 drives the music to its peak, landing in A minor (the dominant of the home key) before naturally falling back to E major at measure 94. The closing of this section is like a strong flame slowly fading in the wind; Ysaÿe writes *smorzando*—meaning “fading away”—and it, too, is in the dotted habanera rhythm.

The next section is marked *Allegretto poco scherzando*. The tempo should be slightly slower than the first section, less fierce, and more playful. It is, of course, still in habanera rhythm. In my opinion, the dotted rhythm here can lean toward a double-dotted feel—the first note tossed lightly into the air, imitating a dance gesture. In this *scherzando* section, Ysaÿe introduces triplet rhythms, such as measures 122, 123, and 137, which bring to mind the famous habanera aria from Bizet’s *Carmen*. Ysaÿe also incorporates left-hand *pizzicato*, adding a percussive flavor to the habanera. After a large rhapsodic, improvisatory run at measure 149, the music returns to the first theme in E major. Most of the materials were heard before in the first section, but now with even greater technical demands and restlessness. The coda begins at measure 202, returning one final time to the habanera’s dotted rhythm—like a rocket launching skyward with unstoppable energy.

From my perspective, this piece is in a rounded binary form; the A section runs from the opening through measure 105, the B section spans measures 106–150, and the return of A extends

from measure 151 to the end. The piece demands not only extraordinary violin technique, clarity, and perfection, but also requires a lot of attention to the stylistic nuances specific to Spanish habanera.

J. S. Bach, Ciaccona from Solo Partita no. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1004

The third piece on my program is the Ciaccona from the D minor solo partita by J. S. Bach. This Ciaccona is a towering work in the history of Western music. It is the most profound and longest movement in all the solo violin sonatas and partitas. As Joel Lester writes, the Chaconne “stands almost alone among his creations for its bold attempt to sculpt a single continuous movement of monumental proportions,” one that forgoes tonal contrast so completely that “every four-measure phrase in the entire movement concludes with some sort of cadential motion that arrives on D.”⁹ Its influence extends far beyond violin and has been transcribed for many other instruments, the most celebrated arrangement being Ferruccio Busoni’s piano transcription. The Ciaccona is a compositional form characterized by continuous variation over a ground bass that provides a framework for melodic elaboration, figuration, and decorative invention.

The Ciaccona is also a dance form that emphasizes the second beat. The piece is in D minor and cast in theme and variation form. To help orient the listener, I have divided it into 64 numbered themes and variations. The opening theme is a four-measure-long phrase. It starts on the tonic chord on the second beat, and then moves to ii diminished, the V dominant seventh chord, i chord, to VI chord, iv, V and back to tonic. Simple as this harmonic progression is, it carries enormous emotional weight. The underlying bass line—D–D–C♯–D–B♭–A–D—returns in several variations later in the piece. Many variations come in pairs, with the second version generally somewhat more elaborate and harmonically complex. Variation 3 starts at measure 9. This is an agitated variation, with the dotted rhythm that lends it a quality of uncertainty and unrest. The chord

⁹Joel Lester, *Bach’s Works for Solo Violin: Style, Structure, Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 126.

progression stays the same as the theme, but the melody descends into the lower register. Variation 4 comes in pairs with variation 3, it is almost identical, but slightly changed in harmony at the end. A diminished seventh chord is added at the end of measure 15. Variation 5 is the tranquil version of the previous two variations, and the melody is sung by the top soprano voice. The chromatic F-sharp at the end of measure 18 is surprising, because it is the first time we hear a note that is not in the D minor scale. It is part of the D7 chord, V/iv. The F-sharp resolves up to G, and the C resolves down to B natural. Variation 6 is the pair to its predecessor, with only small harmonic adjustments in the final two measures. The G-sharp at the end of measure 23 is part of the E7 chord, V/V. And Bach adds a 4-3 suspension in measure 24. Variation 7 is a simple one with straight eighth and sixteenth notes; the bass line from the theme underlies the texture. Variation 8 is a more elaborate than the previous one. Beats two and three of measure 30 form an expressive phrase that will return at the very last moment of this piece, outlining the C-sharp diminished seventh and then V, both functioning as dominant. Variation 9 presents three sequential materials, each of which has a conversational quality, like call and response. The chromatic notes at the end of each soprano voice are sighing along with the bass voice. Their conversation is extremely dramatic and expressive. Variation 10 is a more elaborate version of the previous one, with straight-moving sixteenth notes. Variation 11 opens with a D minor melodic scale, which has been largely absent until now, as the piece has moved mostly through D harmonic minor. Variation 12 is the parallel version of the previous one, featuring a G melodic minor scale at measure 47, analogous to the D melodic scale in the preceding variation. The sequential descending scale in variation 13 sounds melancholy to me. It is also heard for the first time in the piece. Each descending scale then leaps up a tenth, which strikes me as pleading. Variation 14 continues as the reversed version of the previous one. The entire sequence is now rising, holding to the same harmony. I believe this is Bach's way of maintaining balance. After all the wandering eighth and sixteenth notes since variation 7, the music turns more virtuosic and dance-like beginning with variation 15. Variations 15–19 build in intensity through very fast and technically demanding passages, stoking the fire and reaches the climax at measure 76. Variation 20 cools almost immediately, returning to straight eighth notes but now with more tragic harmonies. Diminished

seventh chords appear at the end of each sequential phrase. They are functioning as secondary dominant, leading to the next measure. The sighing gesture in variation 21 seems to be responding to the tragic diminished seventh in the previous variation. After these two fading variations, the music shifts into shimmering, elusive running 32nd notes in variation 22—what I hear as preparation for the long arpeggiated section to come. Variations 23–30 are all arpeggiated chords, beginning with a simple chord progression in variation 23: i–ii–V, i–ii–V. Variation 24 becomes more intense with an F-sharp diminished seventh chord (vii/iv) at measure 94, and introduces a melody in the bass line, which will reappear in different voices in later parts. The melody reappears in the top voice in variation 25, and then moves to the middle voice in variation 26. There are some interesting harmonies in variation 27, at the third beat of measure 106, the F major seventh chord functions as a secondary dominant (V/VI), and it resolves to VI, possibly a deceptive. But the E-flat is hanging on the top voice, making it a suspension and resolving on the second beat. It is a small outburst. Variation 28 is a slow ascending buildup, laden with secondary dominants and diminished chords, as though straining to break free of this misery. Finally, variations 29 and 30 start to descend from the preceding buildup. One observation worth noting is the prevalence of D major chords in this long arpeggiated section. Each functions as the secondary dominant to G (iv in D minor), but collectively they may also foreshadow the surprising shift to D major in the upcoming variation. The opening theme comes back in variation 32, and it leads to the most tender, warm transformation to D major at measure 132. In my opinion, this transformation is magical and heartbreaking. That small ray of light might seem unremarkable in ordinary circumstances; however, it becomes full of energy and possesses healing qualities after a long struggle in the minor key. Variation 35 is a more elaborate continuation of the major theme, moving mostly in eighth notes. The voices have been expanded through variation 36–37. Variation 38 contains a call-and-response gesture that resembles the material in variation 7. A new characteristic shows up in variation 41, the three repeated A's in the top line resemble a bell-like effect that persists and evolves through variations 42–44. The repeated three-note motif reminds me of the famous fate motif from Beethoven's 5th Symphony. They are in different keys and moods, but could this have impacted or inspired Beethoven's composition? As the voices accumulate and the harmonies

intensify, the music arrives at a peak in variation 45. The second beat in measures 178 and 179 creates two painful major and minor second intervals. And the rhythms come back to the opening theme. Variation 46 stays in the same ciaccona rhythm, and from variation 47 Bach uses four variations to create an ascending buildup leading to the second arpeggiated section of the piece. This time it is much shorter than the first, spanning only two variations—also the last two in D major. Moreover, this arpeggiated section is mostly in four voices; whereas the first was in three. The harmonic pace is much faster and more intense. The chromatic bass line in variation 52 is so expressive.

Variation 53 shifts back to the home key of D minor with the ciaccona rhythm. Measures 210–212 are sequential; however, Bach breaks the pattern at measure 212, the expressiveness of the leap from G to E in the top line outlines the A major chord. Variation 55 is mostly dominant prolongation, and the descending second interval on the top line is another sighing gesture, full of struggle. Variation 56 is another sequential material that places a secondary dominant on the third beat, leading into the next sequence. Variation 57 adds quick runs in 32nd notes. The leap from B-flat to D at measure 227 is the most distant leap in the whole piece, which spans more than two octaves. I think it also balances the constant descending line in the following variation. Variation 59 adds intimate chromatic notes in the lower voice, as though Bach has become lost in this misery. The second half of this variation begins to break the descending pattern, pushing to break free of this haze. Finally, in variation 61, a new rhythm comes in, a series of rising triplets eventually breaks free from the bondage. The harmonic pace becomes extremely fast at measure 244, where the harmonies change in eighth notes. And it leads to a massive outburst in variation 62. The original theme returns in variation 63, identical to the opening theme, but this time extends the phrase with a B $\flat$ chord (VI) and uses V/iv twice to prolong the cadence. The sixteenth-note run at measure 255 is the same one we heard in the second measure of variation 8, heard so long before.

This Ciaccona achieves a profound balance, and I mean that in several ways. The piece consists of 64 variations that fall into three large sections. The first runs from the opening to variation 33, all in D minor. And the second spans variations 34 to variation 52, which is in D major. The last section, which functions as a recapitulation from variation 53 to the end, returning

to D minor. Placing the D major section at the very center of the piece gives it maximum contrast and offsets the darkness of the long D minor sections. Bach also tends to each individual variation with care: after a harmonically intense passage, he places calmer, simply moving single-note material. And if there is a series of descending sequences, it is preparing for an outburst in ascending materials.

Eugène Ysaÿe, Solo Sonata no. 4 in E Minor, op. 27

The last piece of music on my program is Ysaÿe's solo violin sonata no. 4 in E minor. I chose to place this piece after the Ciaccona because the two works share many traits. Sonata no. 4 is cast in Baroque dance movements—Allemanda, Sarabande, and Finale. The Allemanda theme also shares the Ciaccona's dotted rhythms, something I will explore further below.

The opening seven measures form an introduction mostly in rolled chords that spans almost the entire range of the violin, writing that strongly recalls Bach's. The upbeat gesture of the very opening measure also echoes the upbeat gesture of Allemanda in Bach's D minor partita. This opening introduction is also highly chromatic. Measures 5 to 7 move in descending chromatic motion, filled with painful struggle. This whole section seems to function as a dominant prolongation leading to the arrival of E minor at measure 8. Measures 8 to the downbeat of 20 constitute the first theme section. The dotted rhythm is its defining characteristic; it provides a French overture and dance feeling, and it calls for real majesty in the playing. The harmony in this section is fairly simple, mostly in E minor with some secondary dominants.

The second theme is introduced at measure 20. Ysaÿe marks it *tranquillo*, providing strong contrast to the intense, majestic first theme. If the first theme is like the tough exterior a man presents to the world, this second theme is his tender interior. It is written mostly in moving 32nd notes. And it requires a clean string-crossing technique on the violin. In my opinion, the string-crossing resembles the swaying of waves. Ysaÿe also wrote "con espress." and small hairpins for the string-crossing passages. The performer should feel the slurred notes as a single gesture—one

unified unit—rather than playing them as individual notes, which causes inconsistency in the smoothness. From measures 27–32, the music again moves chromatically downward. The first theme returns at measure 33, this time with a sorrowful suspension at measure 34. Ysaÿe also adds more chromatic lines—for example, the melody in the lower voice at measure 35 forms a chromatic descent. More counterpoint has been added as well, with the 32nd notes appearing more often in double-stops. An improvisatory passage enters at measure 42, after the first theme section closes on the dominant B, leaving the music suspended. Ysaÿe marks it *molto tranquillo*, making it even more subtle and intimate than the *tranquillo* section at measure 20. To me, this passage at measure 42 is like a monologue—essentially an E minor scale interrupted by appoggiaturas that make it hesitant and halting. The second phrase moves to B minor, the dominant minor, with added counterpoint. The long descending chromatic line from measures 49–52 is particularly sorrowful, as though hope is slowly slipping away, and the soul is being dragged into darkness. The first theme returns at measure 66 and closes in E minor, ending the first movement, *Allemanda*.

The second movement is the *Sarabande*, also a dance. Its essential element is the ostinato line, G–F♯–E–A, which repeats in every measure while Ysaÿe makes variations wrapping around it. There is a note from Ysaÿe to the dedicatee Fritz Kreisler, suggesting that the ostinato line be played twice before the *Sarabande* itself begins. It is challenging for performers to sustain the sound of the ostinato line while doing *pizzicato* in the context of moving chords. When I play this part, I add a little vibrato to the ostinato notes so they project naturally. The first variation of this movement begins with the pickup to measure 12—a simple two-voice counterpoint, with voices gradually accumulating as the music develops. There are also ornamental neighbor-note turns. The third variation starts at measure 31; it is a string-crossing passage that recalls the arpeggiated section in Bach’s *Ciaccona*, and also echoes the string-crossing of the first movement. This is the most difficult variation. The ostinato line should not be played too heavily with excessive vibrato and bow pressure; it should blend naturally into the harmony. Achieving that balance is genuinely difficult.

The last movement, *Finale*, is fast and festive. Ysaÿe marks it “*Presto ma non troppo*” for the tempo, in the unusual time signature of 5/4. Ornamental neighbor notes appear throughout the

movement, resembling Baroque music. Ysaÿe also specifies articulation with dashes and dots on almost every note. The two whole-note scales in measures 13 and 14 represent the new musical language of early 20th-century music. The first theme reappears at measure 24—the first time we hear it in G major, the relative major of E minor. Ysaÿe marks it “*Giocosamente e meno mosso*”, which means cheerful, playful, and a little slower. This shift to a major key in the middle of the last movement might also hint at the final coda. That coda begins at measure 51, marked “*Piu animato ma poco*.” It should be played with growing excitement and energy. The music shifts to E major and a regular 4/4 time signature. The feeling is genuinely celebratory. After a sweeping *allargando* beginning at measure 59, the piece closes in E major.

RECITAL 3

Recital 3 Program

School of Music, Theatre & Dance
University of Michigan

THIRD DISSERTATION RECITAL

Tianyu Liu, Violin
Jinzhao Xu, Piano

Monday, April 20, 2026
Walgreen Drama Center, Stamps Auditorium
8:00 PM

Violin Sonata no. 3 in E-flat Major, op. 12 no. 3 (1798)

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770–1827)

Allegro con spirito
Adagio con molta espressione
Rondo. Allegro molto

Violin Sonata no. 7 in C Minor, op. 30 no. 2 (1802)

Ludwig van Beethoven

Allegro con brio
Adagio cantabile
Scherzo. Allegro
Finale. Allegro

Intermission

Violin Sonata no. 10 in G Major, op. 96 (1812)

Ludwig van Beethoven

Allegro moderato
Adagio espressivo
Scherzo. Allegro
Poco allegretto

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Musical Arts

Recital 3 Program Notes

The three violin sonatas examined here—the Sonata in E-flat major, op. 12 no. 3; the Sonata in C minor, op. 30 no. 2; and the Sonata in G major, op. 96—span the full range of Beethoven's career, from the early Viennese period through the middle period and into the late style. Read together, they show how Beethoven worked within inherited Classical forms while steadily reshaping them. Two procedures recur across all three works and tie them together. The first is Beethoven's treatment of remote flat keys: at structurally unexpected points—late in a development, inside a recapitulation, near the close of a variation set—he turns toward a far-removed flat key to introduce his most lyrical and expressive writing. The second is his handling of cadence. In each sonata he repeatedly approaches a strong perfect cadence and then withholds it, weakening or evading the expected resolution, and reserves the decisive cadential arrival for a later and more telling moment. These two devices—the expressive flat-key digression and the deferred cadence—run through all three sonatas and provide a thread connecting the early op. 12 no. 3 to the late op. 96. The analyses that follow treat each sonata in turn.

I. Violin Sonata no. 3 in E-flat major, op. 12 no. 3

The Third Sonata is a thoroughly Classical work, typical of Beethoven's early period. What makes it of particular interest for the violin is the way Beethoven shares the virtuosic piano figuration with the violin part, so that the string instrument takes on much of the brilliance ordinarily reserved for the keyboard.

The exposition opens with a main theme in E-flat major cast in sentence form. The continuation of the sentence is then repeated, which allows the violin to play the continuation material first introduced in the piano; the repeat also produces a more dramatic first cadence at measure 13. The second theme arrives in B-flat major at measure 29, this time in period form. The first statement of the period closes on a half cadence at measure 36, which makes a repeat of the material necessary and gives both instruments the chance to present the thematic idea. The passage

from measures 44 to 58 is markedly virtuosic and recalls the procedure of a concerto exposition, in which a brilliant passage of scales and arpeggios typically leads up to the final large cadence; here that cadence arrives at measure 58, a perfect cadence in B-flat major.

The first part of the development, with its many virtuosic arpeggios in the piano, is characteristic of Beethoven's early publications, written at a time when he was working to establish himself in Vienna both as a great pianist and as a composer. Most of the development is otherwise standard: material from the exposition returns and is sequenced through a series of keys. A virtuosic arpeggio and scale passage leads to a four-measure passage in C minor at measure 81, which is sequenced by fifths to F minor at measure 87 and to B-flat minor at measure 89. After the B-flat minor statement, the sequence breaks off at measure 94 and Beethoven modulates up a half step to C-flat major, the flat-VI key of the movement. There, he briefly introduces a lyrical theme based on the second-theme material of the exposition. This moment is a clear demonstration of Beethoven's invention: he places a passage of striking lyrical beauty in a remote key at the end of an otherwise conventional development, where nothing in the preceding music has prepared the listener for it.

The recapitulation begins at measure 103. During the repeat of the continuation of the main theme, the music modulates away from the home key very quickly. This allows for a transition different from that of the exposition—one that remains in E-flat major rather than modulating to B-flat major—a common technique for keeping the recapitulation's second theme in the tonic. The movement then comes to a standard close.

The second movement does not contain a great deal of melodic material. Beethoven sustains interest by continuously varying the accompanimental patterns, which gives the movement the quality of being through-composed. The first eight measures present the theme as an antecedent followed by a continuation. The violin repeats the first theme beginning at measure 9. Each time the theme returns in this movement the accompaniment is changed; here, for instance, the piano plays an offbeat triplet figure. The violin's repeat of the theme breaks off at measure 13 and begins to head toward a half cadence at measure 15. An extended passage on the dominant

follows, after which one final statement of the theme appears in the piano at measure 19—again with a different accompanimental rhythm—closing with a perfect cadence at measure 22.

The B section is developmental. It modulates first to F minor and then to the very remote key of D-flat major, with a cadence in that key—the flat-II of the original C major—at measure 30. As in the development of the first movement, Beethoven places a lyrical violin melody in a distant flat key, again reserving his most expressive writing for a harmonically remote region.

The recapitulation of the A section begins at measure 39, where a new accompanimental pattern appears in the violin while the piano restates the main theme. A passage of dominant harmony comparable to that of the exposition begins at measure 46, though it is now greatly extended, and works toward the climax of the movement at measure 59: three loud fortissimo repetitions of a diminished harmony. This gesture may be heard as an early instance of the three-repeated-note motif that Beethoven would return to throughout his career, most famously at the opening of the Fifth Symphony. Beethoven delays the final cadence of the movement as long as possible, withholding it until measure 68, and does not provide a full repeat of the main theme as he had in the exposition.

The finale returns to the virtuosic, concerto-like manner of the first movement. The A section, the main rondo-theme area, is itself in ternary form. The main theme is a basic eight-bar period, played first by the piano and then by the violin, followed by a brief passage emphasizing the dominant, before the main theme returns at measure 32. The B section, the second-theme area, consists of a transition followed by the second theme. That theme begins at measure 52 in B-flat major, the dominant key, in sentence form; its first statement ends on a half cadence, which requires a repeat of the theme in the piano at measure 60, ending with a perfect cadence. A brief transition leads back to the rondo theme.

The return of the A section at measure 79 is cut short relative to the original: it presents the main period of the theme only twice before moving directly to the C section at measure 94. The C section functions as a development. A sequential opening passage leads to a section in G-flat major at measure 109, and the same material is then cycled through E-flat minor, B-flat minor, and back to E-flat minor, which moves quickly to the major mode for the recapitulation.

The recapitulation arrives at measure 163 with the shortest version of the rondo theme: the piano alone plays the eight-bar period before the violin modulates immediately to A-flat major to begin the transition. The D section—the transition and return of the second theme—starts at measure 174, and the second theme itself returns at measure 194 in the home key of E-flat major, as expected.

The final return of the A section, at measure 226, is the most unusual passage of the movement, since Beethoven treats the rondo theme contrapuntally, as a fugue exposition. The first voice states the subject in the piano right hand at measure 226, set against a countersubject in the violin. The second voice enters with the answer in the violin at measure 230, against the countersubject in the piano. The third voice states the subject in the piano left hand at measure 234, against the countersubject in the violin and piano right hand. A brief episode begins at measure 237, and a final statement of the theme uses a further fugal technique, *stretto*, in which the voices enter out of phase in the manner of a canon, at measure 245. This leads to a long passage on the dominant and the final large cadence at measure 258.

II. Violin Sonata no. 7 in C minor, op. 30 no. 2

The Seventh Sonata is a stormy work, comparable in character to the contemporaneous “Tempest” Sonata, op. 31 no. 2. As Mihaela Itigan writes, “It is beyond dispute that Beethoven’s deep feelings found favourable conditions to thrive throughout the Sonata op. 30, no. 2, their turmoil being evoked starting with the sonata form, whose first contact is felt along with the first theme.”¹⁰ It belongs to a period in Beethoven’s career when he was beginning to break away from the conventions of Classical composition, and the sonata shows that change at almost every structural level.

The first movement is largely a conventional sonata form, but with several telling deviations. The exposition is not repeated, and the movement contains a very long coda. Beethoven

¹⁰Mihaela Itigan, “Beethoven’s C Minor and the Anxieties of Inner Conflict from the Perspective of the Piano and Violin Sonatas,” *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Braşov, Series VIII, Performing Arts* 16, Special Issue (2023): 118.

extends the movement in several ways at once—part of his broader effort to expand the sonata form into something considerably larger than it had been in the work of earlier composers. The main theme takes the form of a compound period, each large section of which is itself in sentence form. The theme is introduced by the piano and ends with a half cadence at measure 8, then is repeated by the violin and extended by the avoidance of a cadence at measure 16, not reaching a perfect cadence until measure 23. A short transition begins at measure 23.

The second theme appears in E-flat major, as expected, and has a march-like character. It is in sentence form but does not arrive at a true cadence, which requires a repeat by the piano at measure 37. That repeat also fails to close with a perfect cadence and is instead extended by two measures, ending with a half cadence at measure 46. A long dominant-pedal passage runs from measure 46 to measure 52. A further secondary theme is introduced at measure 52, again in sentence form. Its continuation leads to a dramatic fortissimo cadential bassline in the piano at measure 58, followed by a very long cadential six-four chord and a perfect cadence at measure 62. That cadence is comparatively weak, since the violin ends on G—scale degree three rather than the tonic E-flat—so the piano repeats the theme. A strong cadential bassline is reached again at measure 68, but this time the cadence is avoided altogether: the point at which it should resolve is instead the beginning of the development.

Two features of this passage deserve emphasis. First, Beethoven moves directly from exposition to development without repeating the exposition, so that the join between the two sections is seamless. Second, the entire section is built on a deliberate play with expectation: Beethoven repeatedly sets up strong cadential basslines yet never allows them to arrive at a decisive perfect cadence, which keeps the music in a state of harmonic tension.

The development opens with a six-measure passage based on the main theme, first heard in E-flat major, then sequenced down by major third to B major at measure 81 and to G major at measure 87. This sequencing by major third is itself worth noting; it is more adventurous than the development of the Third Sonata, where the sequencing proceeded more conventionally by fifth. Having reached G major, the dominant of the home key, Beethoven might be expected to bring the development to a close, since the dominant is the goal harmony of a Classical sonata

development. Instead he extends it, introducing a passage based on second-theme material at measure 96 in A-flat major. That material is then sequenced to F minor and down to D-flat major. As at the opening of the development, the material descends by thirds. Beethoven gradually works his way back to the dominant, G major, at measure 113, after which an extended dominant-pedal passage leads back to the recapitulation in the standard manner.

The recapitulation begins at measure 125 with the main-theme sentence, as at the opening of the movement. This time, however, Beethoven inserts a brief tonicization of A-flat major at measure 133, which moves back to C minor through a tragic sighing gesture in the violin part at measure 137. This is a further example of Beethoven's inventiveness: he introduces both an unexpected harmonic shift and a moment of expressive, tragic writing into the recapitulation. The passage is closely comparable to the end of the development in the first movement of the Third Sonata, in that it places a lyrical flat-key episode at a structurally unusual point. After this inserted section, the theme is repeated as expected at measure 139. A very brief transition then leads to the recapitulation of the secondary theme at measure 162, now in C major, the normal key area for the recapitulation of a second theme, before the music returns to C minor at measure 173.

Beethoven begins the coda at measure 208 exactly as he had begun the development, perhaps to lead the listener to expect that the development will be repeated. The development material breaks off at measure 218 with the first statement of the main-theme material in C major, which moves quickly back to C minor through the flat-II, D-flat major, using second-theme material. The movement ends with several strong cadences in C minor—arrivals that may be heard as compensation for the several weak or evaded cadences earlier in the movement, such as those at the end of the exposition and the end of the recapitulation.

The second movement again shows Beethoven making modest expansions to a Classical form. As in the first movement, he uses no repeats, choosing instead to write out every repeated passage so that he can share material between the violin and the piano and create as many different accompanimental gestures as possible. The overall form of the main-theme section is ternary, aba', but Beethoven repeats both the a section and the ba' section, writing out the repeated material

rather than using formal repeat signs so that each instrument has the chance to present every melodic idea.

In the a section, the piano introduces the main theme in periodic form, with an antecedent and a continuation. The antecedent ends at measure 4 with a half cadence, and the continuation ends at measure 8 with a perfect cadence in E-flat, the dominant. The violin then repeats the theme, again cadencing in E-flat at measure 16. The brief b section, measures 16 to 20, is essentially a long dominant pedal. A slightly reharmonized and shorter version of the main theme returns as a' at measure 20, but ends only with a weak cadence in A-flat major at measure 24, after which the dominant-pedal material is repeated with the violin taking the melodic line. The last statement of the main theme begins at measure 28, in the reharmonized version, with the melody now in the violin, ending with a perfect authentic cadence at measure 32.

The B section, beginning at measure 33, presents a contrasting theme in A-flat minor, consisting of a repeated antecedent and a continuation. The four-measure theme, characterized by long notes in the violin and arpeggios in the piano, is introduced and then repeated, taking the form of an antecedent and ending with half cadences at measures 36 and 40. After the theme, a modulation into B-flat minor begins a continuation section in which the piano takes the theme at measure 41. The continuation ends with a dominant pedal on E-flat, preparing the return of the A section at measure 52.

The recapitulation of the A section, again in aba' form, begins at measure 52. The main theme returns with additional accompanimental gestures in the violin, and new figuration appears in the piano when the violin takes the theme at measure 60. The b section at measure 68 again introduces new accompanimental gestures in the violin, as does the a' section at measure 73; the b and a' sections are then repeated with further new accompanimental gestures in the piano while the violin takes the theme. Throughout the movement, the structure of the theme remains fixed while the accompaniment is continually renewed.

The coda begins at measure 84 with material from the end of the main theme—the triplet gesture that had closed the main-theme area at measure 31. This is interrupted by fortissimo ascending scales in the piano, after which the main theme returns unexpectedly in F major, the VI

harmony of the home key of A-flat major, at measure 88, though it quickly moves back to A-flat major. The whole process is then repeated from measure 93, with the violin joining the ascending scales at measure 96 and adding a new countermelody at measure 98. A long dominant pedal begins at measure 103 and runs to measure 111.

The third movement is conventional and straightforward. Its most distinctive feature is the trio, in which the melody appears in the violin and the piano at the same time but three quarter-note beats apart, creating a stretto texture. The scherzo itself is in small ternary form, aba'. The a section is a theme in sentence form, ending with a perfect cadence in the dominant key of G major, which is then repeated by the violin at measure 8. The b section is a brief developmental passage, moving first to D minor at measure 21 and then to A minor at measure 27 before leading back to the theme at measure 34. The a' section, like the a section, moves to a cadence in G major at measure 42, after which Beethoven adds a new continuation at measure 43 that brings the music to the closing cadence of the scherzo at measure 46. The trio is also in small ternary form: its a section is an overlapping theme shared by the violin and piano that ends with a cadence in G, the dominant, at measure 57; its b section is a long dominant pedal from measure 59 to measure 73; and its a' section resembles the a section but is modified to end with a cadence in C major.

The finale opens with a three-measure augmented-sixth cadential gesture leading to a half cadence at measure 3. This is a highly unusual way to open a movement in the Classical style: Beethoven effectively begins the piece with a closing gesture, and the strangeness of that choice marks the more mature style of this sonata as against the Third. Following the three-measure opening gesture, a more typical continuation leads to a further half cadence at measure 7. This seven-measure theme is then repeated and ends with a perfect cadence at measure 14. Beethoven then begins a more traditional second main theme at measure 15, which appears to be a sentence—a four-measure idea, repeated, and followed by a continuation—yet the theme is left incomplete: it lacks a continuation and ends with a half cadence at measure 22. This incompleteness becomes significant later in the movement.

The B section consists of a transition and the second theme. The transition begins at measure 23 with a new version of the opening motive. The second theme arrives at measure 39 in

the expected key of E-flat major; it is far more traditional than anything in the A section, cast in a typical sentence form. Beethoven avoids a perfect cadence at measure 57, moving briefly to E-flat minor and repeating the second theme, then adds a longer extended continuation from measure 63 that leads to a perfect cadence at measure 72. After a series of melodic fragments reminiscent of the opening, beginning at measure 80, the A section returns at measure 92.

In this return of the A section, the first main theme is exactly as it was at the opening. The second main theme, beginning at measure 107, is now in C major. Unlike at the opening, Beethoven now completes this theme, adding a continuation passage from measure 115 that leads at last to a perfect cadence at measure 122. This is another instance of Beethoven innovating on Classical form: he leaves the theme unfinished at the opening and does not complete it until the first return of the A section, which adds dramatic tension to the movement by holding the resolution of the theme in reserve.

The C section serves as the development. It begins at measure 135 with a fugue exposition based on the second main theme, immediately back in C minor: the subject enters at measure 134, the answer at measure 138, and the subject again at measures 142 and 144. After the fugue exposition, a more sequential and episodic passage incorporates melodic fragments from the main theme, leading to the half cadence that ends the development at measure 164.

The recapitulation of the main theme begins as at the opening but changes at measure 174, modulating into B-flat minor. The second main theme is heard partially in B-flat minor but is again cut short, moving quickly back to C minor for the secondary theme. The D section presents the recapitulation of the secondary theme in the expected key of C minor, beginning at measure 201. The coda begins at measure 257 with the opening material, followed by a modulatory passage at measure 267, which leads to a Presto finale based on the main-theme material at measure 282.

III. Violin Sonata no. 10 in G major, op. 96

The Tenth Sonata was written at a time when Beethoven was returning to simpler textures, a tendency also visible in the Piano Sonata op. 101. The complexities of this work are far more subtle than those of some of his middle-period music, and its forms are somewhat more traditional.

What distinguishes the sonata is the way these traditional surfaces conceal subtle structural and rhythmic complications.

The main theme appears simple on the surface but plays with the listener's rhythmic expectations: it begins on an upbeat that can be heard as a downbeat, and the rhythmic ambiguity continues, since the perfect cadence falls on beat two of measure 6 rather than on beat one. Although it sounds straightforward, this opening theme does not fit neatly into any standard category—it most resembles a sentence without being exactly one—and the rhythm is intentionally unsettling, producing an effect close to that of a hemiola. The theme begins to repeat at measure 7 but quickly dissolves into a long, dream-like sequence of arpeggios, a passage concluded by a weak cadence at measure 27. The proportions of the theme are themselves unusual: a six-bar opening theme is followed by a repeat that requires a full twenty measures to reach a cadence. Here again the surface simplicity conceals a more complex underlying structure.

A short transition begins at measure 32. The second theme arrives at measure 41 in the expected key of D major, beginning as a simple period, though its cadence is avoided at measure 48 so that the violin can also play the theme. After the violin's statement, a perfect cadence in D major is strongly expected; instead, Beethoven modulates surprisingly to B-flat major at measure 59. This new B-flat material is heard twice before the music moves back to D major, with the cadence finally arriving at measure 79—and even then the cadence is rather weak, given how long the listener has had to wait for it. The interest of this passage lies precisely in the length of the delay, and in Beethoven's willingness to move to the remote key of B-flat major in the interim.

The development is fairly standard, based on the triplet material introduced in the second theme of the exposition; it moves through B-flat major and A minor on its way back to G major. The recapitulation of the main theme is of particular interest: when Beethoven repeats the main theme at measure 148, he modulates to E-flat major and remains there for the rest of the main-theme material, a subtle but significant alteration to the traditional sonata form. He then moves seamlessly back to G major by means of an augmented-sixth chord at measure 171, beginning the transition at measure 172 on a dominant prolongation, as expected. The recapitulation of the second theme is an exact copy of the exposition, transposed to G major.

The coda begins at measure 234. The main theme is heard in C major for the first time at measure 239, followed by another dream-like arpeggio passage that returns the music to G major by measure 254. The remainder of the movement is typical coda material, alternating between dominant and tonic harmonies. The movement ends with an exceptionally strong perfect cadence, which may be heard as compensation for the several weak cadences earlier in the movement.

The second movement is again simple on the surface, with subtle complications beneath it. Its most unusual feature is that it ends with an augmented-sixth chord and proceeds *attacca* into the scherzo. The A section, which functions as an exposition, begins with a theme in the piano in antecedent-and-continuation form, ending with a perfect cadence at measure 8. The violin then plays a new theme at measure 12, in periodic form, that modulates to A-flat major and cadences there at measure 21. Because this theme reaches a secondary key, it can be heard as a second theme, which would make the movement a sonata form; this formal ambiguity is one of the movement's most characteristic features. Measures 21 to 32 are developmental and modulatory, until a dominant prolongation on a B-flat chord at measure 32 begins the retransition back to the A material.

The recapitulation, the return of the A section, begins at measure 38, where the violin now takes the opening theme. The second theme returns at measure 48 in the piano, though it is much shorter this time—only six measures, compared with ten in the exposition—and remains in E-flat major. The movement ends with an augmented-sixth chord, an unusual way to close a movement.

The third movement is short and fairly simple. Its chief interest lies in the contrast of character between the scherzo and the trio: the scherzo is angular and accented, while the trio is smoother and more legato. The scherzo is in G minor and is very brief; notably, Beethoven dispenses with all the repeats, writing the movement out in full so that he can vary the thematic material more freely. The trio is in E-flat major and has the character of a folk dance, especially in the theme beginning at measure 53; here too Beethoven writes no repeats.

The finale is a theme and variations, a somewhat unusual choice of form for Beethoven, who more often closed a sonata with a sonata-rondo. The movement again seems simple yet contains a surprisingly deep and moving E-flat major section near its end. Beethoven also plays

with the listener's expectations throughout the movement by continually avoiding strong cadences until the very end: the melody consistently ends on B rather than G, producing an imperfect authentic cadence rather than a perfect one. The theme is simple and almost childlike. Its first half is a clear eight-measure period, repeated at measure 9, and its second half is a clear eight-measure sentence, repeated at measure 25. The theme ends with an imperfect authentic cadence—a weak cadence, the melody ending on B instead of G at measures 24 and 32—which leaves room for a stronger and more satisfying cadence later in the movement; in fact, that cadence does not arrive until the very end.

The first four variations each present a different texture without altering the structure of the theme. Variation 5, at measure 145, changes suddenly to Adagio and to a different meter, 6/8. This is a complete and unexpected change of mood, close to the manner of a slow movement, featuring long, improvisatory chromatic scales in the piano that recall the slow movements of Beethoven's piano concertos. This variation is the expressive heart of the movement: out of a simple theme and variations Beethoven draws a passage of genuine sublimity. The variation is made still more striking at measure 161, the first significant harmonic and structural departure from the original theme, with a shift to G minor and then to E-flat major.

A reprise of the original theme appears unexpectedly in E-flat major at measure 164. It is cut short by a fermata at measure 170, after which a sequence of short harmonic progressions moves quickly back to G major. This E-flat major section is a further example of Beethoven using a shift to a flat key as the occasion for the most expressive writing in a work, a procedure also found in the other two sonatas examined here. Just as surprising as the move to E-flat is the rapid return at measure 174 to the joyful, simple character of the opening, with the beginning of Variation 6: the original meter returns immediately, almost as if the E-flat episode had not occurred.

At the end of Variation 6, at measure 216, Beethoven appears to be preparing the first strong cadence in G major, but it is abandoned and interrupted by the G minor variation that follows. The G minor variation at measure 217 switches to a contrapuntal, Bach-like style; the move to G minor is not in itself remarkable, since it is conventional for one variation in a set to be

in the minor mode. The final reprise of the theme begins at measure 245, back in G major. Beethoven teases the final strong cadence twice more, avoiding it at both measure 271 and measure 276. The listener must wait until the very last measure of the piece for the first strong perfect authentic cadence of the movement.

Across these three sonatas, separated by roughly fifteen years and three stylistic periods, two procedures emerge with particular consistency. The first is Beethoven's use of remote flat keys as the site of his most expressive writing. In the Third Sonata, the lyrical theme in C-flat major at the end of the first-movement development, and the violin melody in D-flat major in the slow movement, both place beauty in a harmonically distant region. In the Seventh Sonata, the tonicization of A-flat major within the first-movement recapitulation, with its tragic sighing gesture, performs the same function. In the Tenth Sonata, the reprise of the theme in E-flat major in the finale provides the emotional climax of the variation set. In each case the flat-key digression appears at a structurally unexpected point and carries the work's most poignant music.

The second recurring procedure is Beethoven's treatment of cadence. In all three sonatas he repeatedly approaches a strong perfect cadence and then weakens or evades it, only to reserve a decisive cadential arrival for a later and more telling moment. The Seventh Sonata builds whole sections on cadential basslines that never resolve as expected, and compensates with a series of strong cadences at the close of the first movement. The Tenth Sonata withholds a true perfect authentic cadence in its finale until the final measure of the piece. Taken together, the expressive flat-key digression and the deferred cadence show Beethoven working steadily within the Classical sonata while expanding its expressive and structural range—a process visible already in the early op. 12 no. 3 and carried through to the late op. 96.

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