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RECITAL  
SOCIETY

**VIVA VRS!**

**FALL CONCERTS** 2021

**Augustin Hadelich** violin  
Sunday November 7 2021

# From the Artistic Director

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Dear Friends:

Augustin Hadelich's career has gone into orbit since his last performance for the VRS in 2013: he won the inaugural Warner Music Prize in 2015, a Grammy Award in 2016, and was named Musical America's 'Instrumentalist of the Year' in 2018. He recently joined the faculty of Yale School of Music.

I am delighted that our schedules have finally intersected and we are able to present this solo violin performance for you today.

How wonderful it is to be sitting together again, sharing the impact that live music has upon us, especially for such an intimate solo violin recital!

I would like to thank our Season Sponsor, the Peak Group of Companies, who helped carry us through the COVID-19 shutdown. We are also most grateful to Robert and Denise for their sponsorship of Augustin's concert today.

I would also like to thank the City of Vancouver for its support, and the Westin Bayshore for hosting our musicians.

And I'd like to thank all of you for being here today.

Have a wonderful afternoon.

Sincerely



Leila



## CELLPHONES

The use of cellphones and recording devices is prohibited in the concert hall. Please take this opportunity to turn off all electronic devices.

音乐厅内禁止使用手机，禁止拍照，录音，录像。请观众关闭所有电子器材，感谢您的合作。

# Program

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## PEAK PERFORMANCES AT THE PLAYHOUSE SERIES

**Augustin Hadelich**, violin

Sunday, November 7, 2021  
Vancouver Playhouse 3:00pm

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

### **Partita No. 3 in E major BWV 1006**

Preludio  
Loure  
Gavotte en Rondeau  
Menuet I – Menuet II – Menuet I  
Bourrée  
Gigue

(approx. 18 minutes)

COLERIDGE-TAYLOR PERKINSON (1932-2004)

### **Blue/s Forms**

Plain Blue/s  
Just Blue/s  
Jettin' Blue/s

(approx. 8 minutes)

EUGÈNE YSAÏE (1858-1931)

### **Sonata No. 2 in A minor Op. 27 No. 2 ("Obsession")**

Prelude. Poco vivace  
Malinconia. Poco lento  
Danse des Ombres. Sarabande  
Les Furies. Allegro furioso

(approx. 14 minutes)

## INTERMISSION

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

### **Partita No. 2 in D minor BWV 1004**

Allemanda  
Corrente  
Sarabanda  
Giga  
Ciaccona

(approx. 30 minutes)

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# Augustin Hadelich violin

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**Early Life & Education:** Born in Italy, the son of German parents, Augustin is now an American citizen. He holds an Artist Diploma from The Juilliard School, where he was a student of Joel Smirnoff.

**This Season:** Starting off Augustin's 2021/22 season will be his debut with the Berlin Philharmonic, playing Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 2 with Gustavo Gimeno on the podium. Shortly thereafter, he will perform with the South Netherlands Symphony Orchestra the premiere of a new violin concerto written for him by Irish composer Donnacha Dennehy.

**Recordings:** Augustin is the winner of a 2016 Grammy Award – “Best Classical Instrumental Solo” – for his recording of Dutilleux's Violin Concerto, *L'Arbre des songes*, with the Seattle Symphony under Ludovic Morlot (Seattle Symphony MEDIA). A Warner Classics Artist, his most recent release is a double CD of the Six Solo Sonatas and Partitas of Johann Sebastian Bach.

**Awards & Prizes:** In 2006 Augustin won the Gold Medal at the International Violin Competition of Indianapolis. Among his other distinctions are an Avery Fisher Career Grant (2009), a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship in the UK (2011), the inaugural Warner Music Prize (2015), a Grammy Award (2016), as well as an honorary doctorate from the University of Exeter in the UK (2017).

Augustin plays the violin “Leduc, ex-Szeryng” by Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù of 1744, generously loaned by a patron through the Tarisio Trust.



Photo credit: Suxiao Yang

Augustin Hadelich is represented by Schmidt Artists International, Inc. New York.

# Program Notes

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## Johann Sebastian Bach Partita No. 3 in E major BWV 1006

If polyphonic music was not meant to be played on the violin, Johann Sebastian Bach didn't get the e-mail. His *Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin* BWV 1001-1006 of 1720 reveal clearly the scope of his ambition in this regard. The six works in the collection are admired today not just for their ingenious exploitation of the multi-voice capabilities of the instrument, but also for their skilfully constructed melodic lines that sit idiomatically on the fingerboard.

Keeping the listener from nodding off meant writing musical lines that constantly engaged the ear in new ways, mixing it up with scale figures that alternate with broken chords, passages on the lowest strings trading off with melodic climaxes high up on the fingerboard, and above all with salty dissonances finding resolution in satisfying cadences.

The *partita*, in late Baroque parlance, was just another name for a dance suite, a multi-movement work made up of the four canonical dance forms – allemande, courante, sarabande & gigue – with the occasional addition of a prelude at the beginning and optional fancier dances called *galanteries* (minuets, bourées, gavottes) sandwiched in the middle, right before the zinger finale, the gigue.

The dances would be two parts, each repeated, with ornamentation added at the player's discretion the second time round. Needless to say, these are not pieces meant to accompany actual dancing. They are imaginative recreations of dance genres that reproduce the general character and identifying rhythmic signature of each.

\* \* \*

Bach's Partita No. 3 in the 'bright' key of E major – E being the top string on the violin – is an exceptionally cheery collection of dance pieces. In composing the line-up, Bach keeps the gigue finale but chucks out the allemande, courante and sarabande of tradition and instead gives pride of place to the faster, more rhythmically buoyant *galanterie* dances.

But to open the suite he adds a glittering *Preludio* that begins with a celebratory fanfare on the E major triad tumbling down two octaves in rhythmic figuration to capture our attention. What follows is a *moto perpetuo* of continuous 16th-note motion bobbing and weaving through a succession of related keys, keeping our ears

alert with unpredictable phrase lengths, perky syncopations and captivating violin idioms such as *bariolage* (a succession of notes played on alternating adjacent strings, one stopped, the other open).

Bach obviously liked his handiwork in composing this piece, as he twice re-used it in fully harmonized settings for organ and chamber instruments, the version known as *Sinfonia to Cantata No. 29* later becoming Track 1 on the epoch-making Moog synthesizer album entitled *Switched-On Bach* (1968) by Walter (now Wendy) Carlos.

After this bouncy beginning comes a contrasting movement, the slow and majestic *Loure*, a dance form rarely seen in Bach, although the Fifth French Suite has one. This dance is characterized by a gentle lilt and heavy emphasis on the first beat of the bar, facilitated by a quarter-note-eighth-note upbeat. Often called a "slow gigue", it kicks up its heels as if swimming in molasses.

Also rare is the form in which Bach presents the following *Gavotte*, namely *en rondeau*. The *rondo* pattern, consisting of an opening refrain theme alternating with intervening episodes, was later to become the standard format for sonata finales in the Classical era but here Bach uses it to structure his gavotte. One of the 'lustier' dances in the suite, the gavotte was danced with a lifted step and a skipping forward motion, embodied musically in a characteristic half-bar upbeat and short-short-long rhythm. Both the *Preludio* and this *Gavotte en rondeau* have become crowd-pleasers and are often played as independent pieces.

Daintier and danced with a more delicate 'shuffling' gait is the *Minuet* and Bach gives us two in a matched pair. When *galanteries* come in pairs like this, tradition says that the first will be repeated after playing the second, to round out the group into a nicely symmetrical A-B-A pattern. And here, as often occurs, the second minuet is of a pastoral character, indicated by its drone figure.

The most boisterous member of the set is the *Bourée*, a dance that begins with a quarter-note upbeat and features a fair amount of syncopation, especially in the opening phrase – which makes the underlying rhythm a bit hard to parse on a non-percussive instrument like the violin. This is soon compensated for in what follows, however, as symmetrical repeated phrases are sounded out first *forte* and then *piano*, in an echo pattern.

The Partita ends with *Gigue* in the Italian style, which is to say a hop-filled romp with plenty of harmonic and melodic sequences centred around chordal figuration. The quasi-*moto-perpetuo* feel of this finale makes for a balanced ending to a suite that began in just the same way.

### **Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson Blue/s Forms**

While the name of the Black American pianist, composer and conductor Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson might not be a household name, he is well worth remembering for his remarkable musicianship and accomplishments in a wide range of musical endeavours.

Born in New York in 1932, his mother named him after the Afro-British composer and conductor Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875 -1912), who in turn had been named after the British poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834). Educated at NYU, the Manhattan School of Music and Princeton University, Perkinson composed instrumental and vocal music, as well ballet and film scores, but refused to be pigeon-holed as a composer of 'serious' music. Jazz and popular music engaged him equally and he wrote arrangements for Harry Belafonte and Marvin Gaye, performing as well as a jazz pianist in the Max Roach Quartet.

*Blue/s Forms* (1972) for solo violin is dedicated to violinist Sanford Allen (b. 1939), the first African-American violinist hired by the New York Philharmonic, who premiered the work at Carnegie Hall. The work is in three movements and plays on the idea of the "blue" notes - the flat 3rd and flat 7th degrees of the scale - used in jazz.

This play on major and minor intervals is evident right from the start in the arresting opening of the first movement entitled *Plain Blue/s*, with its slip-sliding double-stops and soulful swing. Just as 'blue' and even more soulful is the meditative and painfully lyrical second movement, *Just Blue/s*. The concluding movement, *Jettin' Blue/s*, channels Paganini through the rollicking musical personality of the country fiddler.

### **Eugène Ysaÿe Sonata No. 2 Op. 27 No. 2 ("Obsession")**

Belgian violinist and composer Eugène Ysaÿe stands as a bridge figure between the late Romantic era of virtuoso violinists such as Henri Vieuxtemps and Henryk Wieniawski (he studied with both of them) and twentieth-century composers such as Debussy, whom he championed. Much loved by violinists and composers alike, he pushed the technique of

the violin to new heights, while at the same time promoting a style of playing that was perfectly idiomatic for his instrument. He was, in short, the violinist's violinist and the respect accorded to him by composers is indicated by the number of important works dedicated to him: the César Franck Sonata (a wedding present for Ysaÿe), Chausson's *Poème*, and string quartets by Debussy, Vincent d'Indy and Camille Saint-Saëns.

Ysaÿe is said to have been inspired to write his *Six Sonatas for Solo Violin* Op. 27 after hearing a concert by the violinist Josef Szigeti in 1923. Each sonata in the series was written in honour of the contemporary violinists he knew. The second in the set, the Sonata in A minor, is dedicated to the French violinist Jacques Thibaud (1880-1953) and bears the nickname "Obsession" (given by the composer himself) for its repeated quotations, in all four movements, of the ominous *Dies irae* (Day of Wrath) chant from the Catholic Mass for the Dead, giving the sonata as a whole an aura of supernatural spookiness and an undercurrent of ghoulish intrigue.

The opening *Prelude* begins with a direct quote from the opening of Bach's Partita No. 3 followed immediately by a grotesque parody of this same opening, marked *brutale* in the score. The Bach *Preludio* was Thibaud's favourite warm-up piece and Ysaÿe may well be having a laugh at his friend's expense in this shocking opening sequence. As much as this movement is a homage to Bach, it soon has to deal with the intrusive presence in its rush of *moto perpetuo* 16th notes with the sombre *Dies irae* tune, elbowing its way into the ear between cheery quotes from the Bach Partita.

The *Malinconia* that follows, as its name suggests, is a two-voice lament, played in the rhythm of a sicilienne *con sordino* (with a mute), an unusual indication in a sonata movement. The *Dies irae* theme only appears at the very end, over a dreary drone tone, like a sombre warning of death.

The chant tune is very present, though, from the very beginning of the third movement *Danse des ombres* (Dance of the shadows) in the sarabande theme played pizzicato at the opening. This theme spawns six variations of increasing complexity and animation until the opening theme returns, played *arco* in majestic multiple-stops, to close the movement.

The finale, entitled *Les Furies*, then bursts out in alternating fits of passionate multiple-stop declamation and ghostly haunting renditions, *sul ponticello*, of the *Dies irae* theme to bring this sonata to a conclusion in a mood of demonic defiance.

## Johann Sebastian Bach Partita No. 2 in D minor BWV 1004

Bach's Partita in D minor for solo violin is a work of imposing gravity, a work astonishing as much for the inventiveness of its small-scale figuration as for the brilliance of its architectural construction.

As a dance suite, it sits in diametrical contrast to the *galanterie*-focused Partita No. 3 in E major in having among its dance movements nothing *but* the four canonical types – allemande, courante, sarabande and gigue. But usurping the last word usually accorded to the gigue, it adds a majestic chaconne that exceeds in length all four of them together, making this dance suite, as a whole, heavily end-weighted in its aesthetic momentum.

This tilt towards the final movement comes largely through the way in which the dances preceding it are composed. It's as if they are all waiting for the finale, expecting its arrival, giving hints along the way that something big is about to happen. Taken together, they are like a long intake of breath that finally gets released in the Chaconne.

The premonitions in this build-up are many and varied. While the suite's allemande, courante and gigue each have their own character – evenly-paced, flowing and jumpy, respectively – they all follow a similar harmonic layout, somewhat effacing their individuality as independent pieces. They modulate to the same keys, in the same order, as if they were just melodic variations on the same harmonic pattern – as in a chaconne. And all three overwhelmingly consist of single melodic lines, further diminishing their sound impact in comparison to the bold thunderclap that strikes the ear in the opening bars of the finale.

The problem of creating full harmonies in a single-line texture is addressed by Bach by his use of the *style brisé* (“broken style”) typical of 17th-century French lute music, a style of writing in which chordal progressions are “broken up” into irregular and unpredictable patterns of arpeggios and running notes. In such a texture the ear is constantly engaged in the process

of ‘re-composing’ this expanded version of the underlying harmonic and melodic patterns into something simpler. The profusion of notes created also offers greater opportunity for expressive nuance in performance.

Not all of the dance movements, though, are composed in this way. The third dance movement prophetically announces the finale (a) in its *genre*, a sarabande, like the chaconne, with emphasis on the second beat of the bar; (b) in its *texture*, rife with multiple-stops; and (c) in its *melodic material*, some of which anticipates the same figuration in the finale.

When the Chaconne does arrive, it comes in the form of a *sarabande variée* comprised of 64 variations on a four-bar harmonic pattern presented at the outset, the harmonies determined by a repeating bass line. There are 33 variations in the minor mode, 19 in the major, the arrival of which marks a dramatic change in mood, and then finally 12 more in the minor, giving the work a rough three-part design.

The extreme variety of textures and moods that Bach manages to create out of this simple 4-bar pattern is the reason for its exalted status within the classical canon. Among the many ways he finds to say the same thing over and over again, harmonically speaking, are: varying the note durations, from half notes down to 32nds; alternating simple scalar patterns with chromatic variations on them; unpredictable melodic lines in *style brisé* contrasted with clearly patterned sequential repetitions; tightly focused melodies in a small range alternating with wide-ranging spans of arpeggiation and running notes; single-line melodies alternating with two-voice textures; echoing call-and-response patterns between contrasting registers; single melodic lines that gradually evolve into chordal figurations whipping across all four strings in a continuous pattern of rocking arpeggios; and various sonic ‘tics’ (in popular music they would be called “hooks”) such as bell-like notes repeating through the texture in various registers.

# Thank You!

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COVID-19 has changed a great many things about the way in which we move through the world and interact with one another. Over the last 20 months, our supporters have sustained us in ways that we couldn't have imagined, and never have we been more grateful or more appreciative.

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There are many ways to support the VRS including making a philanthropic gift, sponsoring a concert and/or including us in your estate plans. If you would like more information, please contact us at 604.602.0363.

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