PROGRAM

Arvo Pärt: *Fratres* (1977)

Béla Bartók: *Romanian Folk Dances*, BB 68 (1915)
  Joc cu băţă (Stick Dance)  
  Brăul (Sash Dance)  
  Pe loc (Stamping Dance)  
  Buciumeana (Hornpipe Dance)  
  Poargă Românească (Romanian Polka)  
  Mărunţel (Quick Dance)

Ludwig van Beethoven: Andante and Variations in D, no. 2, WoO 44 (1796)

Marc Lavry: *Three Jewish Dances*, op. 192 (1945)
  Sher – Yemenite Wedding Dance – Hora

INTERMISSION

Maurice Ravel: *Vocalise-étude en forme de habanera* (1907)

Johann Sebastian Bach: Partita No. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1004 (ca. 1720)
  Chaconne

Manuel de Falla: *Siete canciones populares Españolas* (Seven Popular Spanish Songs) (1914)
  El paño moruno  
  Seguidilla murciana  
  Nana  
  Canción  
  Polo  
  Asturiana  
  Jota

Manuel de Falla: *Danza Española* from *La vida breve*

PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE. Please be considerate of others and turn off all phones, pagers, and watch alarms, and unwrap all lozenges prior to the performance. Photography and recording of any kind are not permitted. Thank you.
Consciously rejecting complexity, Estonian composer Arvo Pärt seeks to uncover a simple truth in his music, using repetition as a foundation for its building blocks. Religious or spiritual feeling, drawing on sources that go back to Gregorian chant, has added to its wide appeal. Fratres, originally composed in 1977 for five unspecified wind and five string parts, is one of his earliest pared-down pieces. Its Latin title, which means “brethren,” adds to the quasi-religious feel underlining the music. Now among his most-arranged pieces, it opens with a brilliant, across-the-strings prelude to an as-yet-unstated theme. The solemn, chant-like melody is then put through a sequence of contrasting, emotionally wide-ranging variations over an ever-present drone, punctuated by tolling drum.

Hungarian composer Béla Bartók transcribed his first folksongs in what was then northern Hungary in 1904. Two years later, he started to collect Slovak folk music, and two years later still, he added what eventually grew to be a collection of more than 3,500 Romanian folk melodies. He incorporates seven of these tunes in his orchestral Romanian Folk Dances of 1915, which quickly became one of his most popular compositions. Its original title, Romanian Folk Dances from Hungary, was dropped after World War I, when the Treaty of Trianon remapped Transylvania. As was his practice, Bartók scrupulously identifies the type of folk melody and its origins in the score.

Toward the end of the 18th century, the Neapolitan mandolin, tuned like the violin in fifths, became widely popular throughout Europe. The mandolin serenade soon became a feature in the opera house. The best-known aria of the kind is “Deh, vieni alla finestra” found in Mozart’s Don Giovanni (1787). By the end of the 18th century, Vienna and Prague had become the main centers of mandolin playing, and it was in the latter city that Ludwig van Beethoven was commissioned to write several short pieces for the instrument. His friend, violinist Wenzel Krumpholz, doubled as a mandolin virtuoso, but it was probably for Countess de Clary that Beethoven wrote two sonatinas and the Andante and Variations in D. These are three of the four surviving original pieces for mandolin by Beethoven, though several others are known to have been lost. The Andante and its six decorative variations remained unpublished and without an opus number in Beethoven’s lifetime.

French composer Maurice Ravel had a special feeling for the colors, moods, and humor of Spain, an enthusiasm shared by many French artists of his generation. But Ravel came by his love of things Spanish authentically. He was born in Ciboure in the Basses-Pyrénées to a Basque mother. His earliest work to reflect his love of Spanish rhythms is a Habanera for piano, four hands, subsequently reworked as the third movement of the Rapsodie Espagnole. The Vocalise-étude en forme de habanera came a decade later, in 1907, initially as a vocal work for wordless voice and piano, then in transcriptions for many instruments, the violin in particular.

Johann Sebastian Bach’s magnificent, stately Chaconne first appeared as the crowning movement of the Partita No. 2 in D Minor for solo violin. A chaconne is, traditionally, a Baroque dance and instrumental form presenting a sequence of continuous variations on a four-bar phrase. Its origins, appropriately enough, lie in 17th-century lute music, song, and dance. The 64 variations of Bach’s Chaconne for solo violin have challenged both performers and arrangers for almost three centuries. As a nonviolinist, Brahms felt that he could only truly appreciate what he called “one of the most wonderful and most incomprehensible pieces of music” by transcribing it for piano.

Born in Riga, Latvia, composer and conductor Marc Lavry left a thriving career in Latvia and Germany for Palestine in 1935. He established and led musical organizations in the new Jewish state and created more than 400 compositions, writing prolifically from opera to popular song. The Three Jewish Dances originated in a collection of six for violin and piano. The first, Sher (Scissors Dance), is a Hasidic Jewish style of energetic dance. By contrast, Yemenite Wedding Dance represents a modest, rather gentle appearance by the bride. The exuberant Hora finale is based on a dance form that Lavry first heard at an all-night party at Kibbutz Degania—“the dance, with its shouts and rhythmic legwork, left a huge impression on me,” he said.

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left hand. Avi Avital is not alone in wanting to share the beauties of one of the very finest polyphonic movements for a solo instrument to come from Bach’s pen.

Written in Paris, Spanish composer Manuel de Falla’s Seven Popular Spanish Songs received their premiere in Madrid, after the war forced the Spanish composer to end his seven-year sojourn in France. Falla sold the rights to a Paris publisher, the legend goes, for less than the price of a bottle of champagne. The songs quickly became the most performed of all Spanish songs and were arranged by various hands for different instruments. Falla’s aim was to create a sequence of songs that would represent the different regions and idioms of Spain. Although the songs are based on various printed sources, Falla said, “In popular song, the spirit is more important than the letter.”

The Andalusian city of Granada is the setting for Falla’s short opera _La vida breve_ (The Brief Life), the earliest of his mature works. Its characters inhabit an emotional world full of joy, sorrow, dancing, and the agony of a broken love affair. The popular _Danza Española_ is drawn from the opera.

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AVI AVITAL

Grammy-nominated mandolinist Avi Avital is one of the world’s most exciting and enterprising musicians, deeply committed to building a fresh legacy for the mandolin through virtuosic performance and distinctive new repertoire while celebrating the instrument’s classical roots. Recognized by the New York Times for his “exquisitely sensitive playing” and “stunning agility,” he performs internationally as an orchestral soloist, a chamber musician, and a Baroque specialist while also venturing into the realms of jazz and world music.

Mr. Avital has performed at prestigious venues throughout the world, including Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center in New York City, Berlin Philharmonic Hall, KKL...
Luzern, Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing, and Wigmore Hall in London. He has appeared as a soloist with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, I Pomeriggi Musicali di Milano, San Diego Symphony, Colorado Symphony, San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, and Berliner Symphoniker under the batons of Mstislav Rostropovich, Sir Simon Rattle, and Philippe Entremont, among others. Mr. Avital has been a guest at the Tanglewood, Aspen, Lucerne, Spoleto, Ravenna, and Savannah festivals. He has performed over 80 world premieres, including works written for him by composers Avner Dorman, David Bruce, Federico Gardella, and Josef Bardanashvili. He has been featured on National Public Radio’s All Things Considered and Tiny Desk Concerts.

Mr. Avital began the 2014–15 concert season with a solo recital at London’s Wigmore Hall, which was followed by visits to the University of Chicago, Stanford University, Cremona, Salle Gaveau, Globe Theatre, Manchester Chamber Concerts Society, Dortmund Konzerthaus, Montreal Bach Festival, Verbier Festival, Cartagena Music Festival, Buenos Aires, and Taiwan. He collaborated with Mahan Esfahani, Shalev Ad-El, Ksenija Sidorova, Ray Chen, David Greilsammer, Andreas Scholl, and the Danish String Quartet. Mr. Avital returned to Carnegie Hall in March during an extensive North American tour with the Venice Baroque Orchestra, visiting the cities of Palm Springs, Escondido, Irvine, Tucson, Edmond, Austin, Coral Gables, Cambridge, and Calgary. Forthcoming orchestral engagements include concerts with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Kremerata Baltica, Kölner Akademie, Geneva Camerata, Israel Camerata, Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra, Wroclaw Philharmonic, Hamburg Symphony, and I Musici di Roma.

An exclusive Deutsche Grammophon recording artist, Mr. Avital’s debut recording for the label in 2012, Bach, featured his own transcriptions of Bach concertos for harpsichord and violin in arrangements for mandolin and orchestra. His second album, Between Worlds, was released in January 2014 and combined elements of classical and traditional folk music. A new album with the Venice Baroque Orchestra was released in February 2015. In 2010, Mr. Avital became the first mandolin player to receive a Grammy nomination in the category of Best Instrumental Soloist for his recording of Avner Dorman’s Mandolin Concerto with Andrew Cyr and the Metropolis Ensemble. In 2008, he received Germany’s coveted Echo Award for his recording with the David Orlowsky Trio.

Mr. Avital was born in Beersheba, Israel, in 1978. He began learning the mandolin at the age of eight and later graduated from the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance and the Conservatorio Cesare Pollini in Padova, Italy. In 2013, he was the recipient of a generous grant from the Salon De Virtuosi. Mr. Avital lives in Berlin.

OHAD BEN-ARI

Israeli-born pianist Ohad Ben-Ari performed at age 12 with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. The following year, he was already enrolled as a student at Tel Aviv University, where he studied piano with the legendary Pnina Salzman and composition with Joseph Dorfman. Mr. Ben-Ari has won numerous top prizes at international competitions, among them the ARD Music Competition (Munich) and the coveted Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition (Tel Aviv). As a result, he received many invitations to appear as a soloist with orchestras around the world.

In 1996, Mr. Ben-Ari headed for the United States and set to work as a music producer specializing in pop and urban music. In the following years, he worked with top American pop artists, appeared in major TV shows, and recorded a vast array of styles and repertoire that ranged from classical to jazz and pop. Big success followed his joint venture with his sister, violinist Miri Ben-Ari, who won a Grammy Award while working with Mr. Ben-Ari on her solo album for Universal Records.

Since 2010, Mr. Ben-Ari has resided in Berlin, where he continues his extensive work as a pianist and composer. His partnership with many years with Berlin-based violinist Guy Braunstein has been reinstated, and the two now often record and perform together. Mr. Braunstein appointed Mr. Ben-Ari as artistic director of the Bahnhof Rolandeck chamber music festival. Mr. Ben-Ari has also acted as director of the ID Festival of the Arts in Berlin since 2014. Supported by the German government, the purpose of this festival is to present the work of Israeli artists who reside in Germany.

A debut performance of his original composition for piano and orchestra, Tips, took place early in 2013 with the Hamburger Symphoniker. In 2014, his concerto for marimba was premiered in Tokyo by the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra. His latest work, Violins of Hope, was commissioned by the Berliner Philharmoniker and is scheduled to be performed in 2015.

Mr. Ben-Ari tours regularly as a pianist in Europe, the United States, and the Far East. Two events that mark a special milestone in Mr. Ben-Ari’s career took place in 2014: a debut performance in London’s Wigmore Hall and at the Berliner Philharmonie, where he performed Hans Werner Henze’s epic Nine Sacred Concertos with Sir Simon Rattle.