

FACULTY & GUEST ARTIST RECITAL

Susanna Klein, violin & Jeremy Thompson, piano

Tuesday, January 18, 2022 at 7 p.m.

Sonia Vlahcevic Concert Hall | Singleton Center for the Performing Arts
922 Park Avenue | Richmond, Virginia

Jhula Jhule.....Reena Esmail (b. 1983)

Violin Sonata No. 7 in c minor, Op. 30, No. 2.....Ludwig v. Beethoven (1770-1827)

- I. Allegro con brio
- II. Adagio cantabile
- III. Scherzo. Allegro
- IV. Finale. Allegro

Preludio No. 3 Devaneio (Daydream).....Flausino Vale (1894-1954)

Preludio No. 1 Batuque (Beat)

Sonata in D minor.....Phillip Fridriech Bøddecker (bapt. 1607-1683)

La Fontaine d'Arethuse (The Fountain of Arethusa).....Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937)

Salut D'Amour.....Edgard Elgar (1857-1934)

Notes on the Program

By Susanna Klein

I first heard **Reena Esmail's** music in 2019 at the University of Richmond's Tucker-Boatright Festival called "South Asian Connections". I was immediately smitten, and experienced what can only be described as "Fernweh", the German word for "farsickness", or an extreme longing to see far-flung places beyond our doorstep. Thanks to Reena's website, I can tell you about the how the work came to be:

"When writing this piece, to be based upon Indian folksong, I cast a wide net for source material – I scoured the internet and my large collection of Indian music, listening to everything from Bengali Bauls, Rajasthani folk singing. I even tried to find songs from Goa and Gujarat, the places my parents are from in India, typing every conceivable search term into Google. However, the material I felt most connected to in the end didn't come to me from a distant corner of India, but in the most common way folk music can be transmitted: through the generations of my own family. This piece uses two folk melodies. The first is a song called "Ankhon vina andharon re", which I found on a recording my mother's father made long before I was born. Of his five grandchildren, I am the only one who never met him. But as I've grown up, I realize how much we have in common, including our deep love of music. My mother often tells me stories of listening to records of Beethoven Symphonies on hot nights in Kenya, where my grandfather spent most of his life. All the lights were turned off, and they would listen as a family, in the silent darkness, following his lead as he taught them to savor each note. We still have recordings of my grandfather singing songs in many languages – English, Marathi, Konkani, Portuguese and others – which I listen to from time to time, imagining what it might have been like to know him. The other song comes to me from my grandmother, my father's mother. My father's parents (who even our American friends affectionately called Mamma and Pappa) moved to the US the year before I was born, and lived with us for most of my childhood. I grew up speaking to Mamma only in Gujarati, a language that I spoke to no one else until she died in 2007. As a baby, Mamma would often sing me this lullaby: *Jhula Jhule, Jhula Jhule / Reena Rani Jhula Jhule* which translates: *Back and forth, back and forth / Reena the Queen swings back and forth.*"

The seventh is my favorite of the **Beethoven** sonatas, not least due to the fact that I studied it with my favorite teacher, Roman Totenberg. It is in the composer's signature key, c minor, just like the Fifth symphony, the *Pathétique* Piano Sonata, and the Choral Fantasy. Only the first and last movements have a dark dramatic character, however. The second movement is airy and sweet. According to one source, Beethoven came to regret the third movement. According to

one biographer "He definitely wished to delete the Scherzo allegro... because of its incompatibility with the character of the work as a whole". Bah humbug, I love it.

Flausino Vale was a lawyer, a researcher in Brazilian Folk Music, and Professor of Music History at the Conservatório Mineiro de Música. His main legacy, however, is that of a violinist-composer. The two preludes on the program are from a collection of 26 Solo Preludes which he began writing for the instrument in 1922 and continued until the end of his life in 1954. These virtuosic miniatures are inspired by Brazilian music and culture. Vale was what we now call an Ethnomusicologist, before there was a name for such a thing. Vale went so far as to include an "Imitation of Nature Voices Catalog" for the Preludes in which he transcribes for the violin the everyday sounds of small towns... dogs barking, cats meowing, birds singing, fireworks and Brazilian folk guitars. I heard one of these Preludes in a workshop at Juilliard several years ago and couldn't wait to play them. It was not for sale in the US at the time, so I started contacting Brazilian Professors to see who could help me. One such professor was kind enough to buy the part in Brazil for me and send it north. The world is such a nice place! Since then, parts for violin and also viola have been published on sheetmusicplus.com

Böddecker wrote his Sonata in D minor for Violin and Continuo in 1651 as part of a larger work, the *Sacra Partitura*. The complete piece consists of a series of motets for soprano and continuo with two solos - this one, and one for bassoon. It's unlikely that you would have ever heard of Böddecker, I certainly had not. The composer came to my attention recently because he was the organist of the Stuttgart Stiftskirche (in English, the Collegiate Church), where I heard a beautiful Bach Cantata this past October. The Stiftskirche has been featuring Bach cantatas with full orchestra monthly during its services for the last decade. As it appears today, the church was built in 1240, and rebuilt after the second world war. Structures of a 10th or 11th century romanesque church, however, can be found within the outline of today's church. Most of Böddecker's music is lost. Jeremy created a realization of the continuo part, which only exists in outline form. I liked the idea of bringing to life something from many centuries ago.

Polish composer and virtuoso pianist **Karol Szymanowski** wrote music that is lush, colorful and inventive. He was a duo partner of Roman Totenberg, who championed his works throughout his life. I think you can hear that Szymanowski was influenced by the music of Chopin, Strauss and Debussy, but he has a style all of his own. The Fountain of Arethusa is one of three myths he wrote for violin and piano, each one drawing on Greek Mythology. Here is the story, according to mythworld.com:

“Arethusa means "the waterer". In Greek mythology, she was a nymph and daughter of Nereus and later became a fountain on the island of Ortygia in Sicily. The myth of her transformation begins when she came across a clear stream and began bathing, not knowing it was the river god Alpheus. He fell in love during their encounter, but she fled after discovering his presence and intentions, as she wished to remain a chaste attendant of Artemis. After a long chase, she prayed to her goddess to ask for protection. Artemis hid her in a cloud, but Alpheus was persistent. Arethusa began to perspire profusely from fear, and soon transformed into a stream. Artemis then broke the ground allowing Arethusa another attempt to flee. Her stream traveled under the earth to the island of Ortygia, but Alpheus flowed through the sea to reach her and mingle with her waters.”

Everything in the myth is portrayed in the music, so follow closely. At the outset the piano portrays the stream (Adolphus) and the violin plays the part of Arethusa. You'll hear the chase in the middle of the piece. After a dramatic pause in the music, Arethusa is in hiding. Descending double stop trills might be Arethusa flowing down below the earth. At the close of the piece we hear the mingling of waters in the form of soft trills.

Elgar wrote *Salut D'Amour* for his fiancée Alice Roberts in 1888, as a reciprocal gesture of affection - Alice had presented him with “Love's Grace”, a poem she had written for him only a few weeks before. The original title of this piece was “Liebesgruss” (Love's Greeting), changed later by Schott Music, the copyright holder, to “Salut D'Amour” in order to spur on sales through a more exotic title. The charming vignette has been an audience favorite for well over a century and has been arranged for many different instruments. We are playing the original :)

Susanna Klein is Associate Professor of Violin at VCU and founder of Practizma, a company that creates joyful practice tools. Jeremy Thompson is Director of Music at First Presbyterian Church in Charlottesville and Director of the Plena Voce Chamber Choir. They met online and love playing together whenever they can fit it in their busy schedules.