SCHOOL OF MUSIC

THE ADKINS/NEWMAN DUO
Elisabeth Adkins, violin
Edward Newman, piano

Monday, October 13, 2025
7 p.m. PepsiCo Recital Hall

PROGRAM

Suite Populaire Espagnole (1914) — Manuel deFalla (1876-1946)
- El Paño Moruno
- Nana (Lullaby)
- Canción
- Polo
- Asturiana
- Jota

Five Melodies for violin and piano, op. 35bis (1925) — Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)
- Andante
- Lento, ma non troppo
- Animato, ma non allegro
- Allegretto leggero e scherzando
- Andante non troppo

Pause

Sonata No. 1 in A major for violin and piano, op. 13 (1873-76) — Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)
- Allegro Molto
- Andante
- Allegro vivo
- Allegro quasi presto

Program Notes

MANUEL DE FALLA (1876-1946)
SUITE OF SPANISH FOLK SONGS (1914-15)

Of the four composers who were most involved in developing a "Spanish style" and popularizing it internationally—Albéniz, Granados, Falla, and Turina—Falla is the best known in this country, though mainly for that perennial favorite, "Ritual Fire Dance." Falla was born in Cadiz in Andalucia, and his early musical training there was climaxed by two years at the Royal Conservatory in Madrid. But like other Spanish composers he was drawn inexorably to Paris (1907-14), where he found opportunities for performances before audiences fascinated by Spanish exoticism, and made stimulating friendships with Dukas, Debussy, and Ravel. Years later Falla declared that without France he could have achieved nothing—it was there that he absorbed the techniques of the reigning Impressionism and blended them with his "Spanish voice" into a brilliant, distinctive style.

It is also to Paris that we owe the inception of the *Siete canciones populares españolas*. In 1914 a Spanish singer in the cast of one of Falla's operas requested from him "something Spanish" for a proposed recital. But because of his return to Madrid at the outbreak of World War I, his settings of seven Spanish folk songs were first performed there in 1915 by Luisa Vela with the composer accompanying. Falla was here experimenting with creating harmonies, not from the notes of the major-minor system, but from the tones used in the folk melody itself. This lends to these settings a colorful and exotic sound, heightened by much use of guitar figures.

These songs came to the attention of Pawel Kochanski (1887-1934), a well-known Polish violinist of the day, who transcribed six of them for violin and piano and published them as the suite heard this evening. The set represents a fascinating selection of Spanish folk songs--*El paño moruno* (The Moorish cloth) from the province of Murcia; *Nana*, a gentle lullaby, and the fiery *Polo* from Andalucia; the grieving *Asturiana* from Asturias; the lively *Jota* from Aragon; while the source of the bittersweet love song *Canción* is unknown. Although Kochanski maintained the essential texture of the piano accompaniment, he did give increased opportunities to the violin to soar into the upper octave and to pluck or strum along with the piano to add to the guitar effects.

GABRIEL FAURÉ (1845-1924)
SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO NO. 1 IN A, op. 13 (1876)

The long life of Gabriel Fauré encompassed remarkable shifts of musical style—from the pioneering Romanticism of Berlioz, Chopin, Schumann, and Liszt during his early years to the turmoil of the Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Bartók generation toward the end of his life. Fauré was certainly not unaware of the tumultuous upheavals in the musical world, but with typical French reserve he forged an independent path marked by a restrained use of musical innovations within a cool and controlled style. It was a style admirably suited to more intimate music making, and it is surely no accident that Fauré produced some of the finest examples of French lyric song, as well as the most substantial body of chamber music in the French Romantic tradition.

Fauré's style had been much influenced by his early training at the École Niedermeyer in Paris. The director, Louis Niedermeyer, was a pioneer in the restoration of the Gregorian chant tradition in the Church

and the renaissance of polyphonic music in France. This rigorous training in organ, counterpoint, and modal harmony prepared Fauré well for the organist-choirmaster posts with which he supported himself for much of his life. These years undoubtedly also shaped his musical speech, as did the example of an outstanding teacher at the school—Camille Saint-Saëns, who became his mentor and lifelong friend, introducing him to the "moderns," who were completely disregarded in the curriculum.

The year 1877 was a significant one for Fauré: his *Sonata for Violin and Piano No. l,* to be heard this evening, was performed with surprising success at a concert of the Société Nationale de Musique, marking a turning point in his career. Shortly afterward he was engaged to the lovely Marianne Viardot, daughter of the famous opera singer Pauline Viardot. When the young lady broke off the engagement a few months later, Fauré consoled himself by declaring that such a marriage into an operatic family would have oriented his work towards the operatic stage, for which he felt himself unsuited. So he was actually freed to pursue his own path—solo and chamber music—confirmed, moreover, by the great success of his first major chamber work.

On the surface there was little that was novel about the sonata: the 1st movement was cast, probably at Saint-Saëns's suggestion, in the sonata form of the Classical era; the 2nd movement is a lyrical *Andante* in a soothing 9/8 barcarolle rhythm; the 3rd is a sparkling *Scherzo*; and the last a finely developed *Finale*, again following Classical models. This early sonata remains one of Fauré's most popular works, because of its charming, even captivating, character. His pupil Florent Schmitt later described the *Sonata for Violin and Piano* as a *coup d'essai* (a trial effort) that proved to be a *coup de maitre* (a master stroke)—a most enjoyable offering for this evening's concert.

--Alis Dickinson Adkins