



PHOTO CREDIT: SHERVIN LAINEZ

# Joshua Bell, violin Peter Dugan, piano

FRIDAY, APRIL 4, 2025 | 7:30PM

JACKSON HALL | UC DAVIS

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## ***Discovering What's Next***

The artists we select for each Mondavi Center season generally fall into one of two categories: returning favorites that Mondavi Center audiences are telling us they'd like to see again; and artists that we believe belong on our stages but haven't yet made an appearance.

We adore our relationships with artists making return engagements. Part of the magic of these returns comes from watching artists evolve their craft and explore new repertoire, but with the warmth and comfort of seeing an old friend.

An exemplar of the power of long-term relationships is Joshua Bell, who returns in recital on April 4. Bell first performed at the Mondavi Center in November 2002, during our inaugural season. He appeared as a guest soloist with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, an ensemble he now leads. He was 34 and it had been just two years since he was deemed one of *People* magazine's 50 most beautiful people in the world. Bell is still a beautiful person, and in ways that run far deeper than a glossy magazine article.

Over these last 20+ seasons, we've watched a young star become an absolute legend. At this stage in his career, Bell's extraordinary tone and mastery of the repertoire are so remarkable that he sometimes seems superhuman. It has been an incredible journey so far.

All season long I've been communicating about the idea of discovery, encouraging you, our wonderful patrons, to embrace the familiar and the beloved while trying something new. Supporting those artists making their Mondavi Center debuts is critical to the long-term health of the performing arts.

The collaborative process of discovery, between audiences and arts organizations, is part of the fuel that feeds the birth of stars. The Joshua Bells of the world, while in possession of innate and extraordinary talent, have their careers because arts institutions and arts audiences believed in them, supported them, and showed up to see them perform.

As the end of my first full season as Executive Director approaches, I'm grateful that so many of you heeded the call of discovery, supporting our efforts to ensure a vibrant and interesting future for the arts. I'm sure that the more than 20 artists that made their Mondavi Center debuts this season are grateful too.

Thank You!

**Jeremy Ganter**  
*Executive Director*

# Joshua Bell, violin Peter Dugan, piano

## PROGRAM

Violin Sonata No. 5 in F Major, Op. 24 (“Spring”)

*Allegro*

*Adagio molto espressivo*

*Scherzo: Allegro molto*

*Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo*

Ludwig van Beethoven

(1770-1827)

Violin Sonata No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 45

*Allegro molto ed appassionato*

*Allegretto espressivo alla Romanza*

*Allegro animato*

Edvard Grieg

(1843-1907)

---INTERMISSION---

Violin Sonata No. 1 in A Major, Op. 13

*Allegro molto*

*Andante*

*Scherzo: Allegro vivo*

*Finale: Allegro quasi presto*

Gabriel Fauré

(1845-1924)

*Additional works to be announced from the stage*

\*PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE\*

*Management for Joshua Bell: Park Avenue Artists*

*Booking for Joshua Bell: Primo Artists*

# Program Notes

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## **Violin Sonata No. 5 in F Major, Op. 24 ("Spring") (1800-1801)**

**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN**

**Born in Bonn, Germany, December 17, 1770**

**Died in Vienna, Austria, March, 26, 1827**

The archetype of the tortured genius, Beethoven worked tirelessly to hone his craft of composition, churning out endless edits and recomposing entire movements of pieces before showcasing them to his audience. A craftsman of harmonies with a flair for the dramatic, Beethoven pushed the Classical Era to its limits, paving the way for the harmonic complexity and emotional expressivity of the Romantic Era.

Although modern listeners often credit Beethoven for his harmonic innovation in lieu of tuneful melodies, Violin Sonata No. 5 in F Major bursts with melodic freshness and emotional depth. The first movement begins with a memorable, sprightly soaring theme, blooming with the new life of Spring, that is passed between the violin and piano. The slow second movement also presents a delicate dance between the violin and piano. The weeping violin line gives way to more sparse melodic moments, allowing the ornamental piano part to relish in the spotlight. The scherzo movement, an Italian term which translates as "joke," is fast paced, with many off-beat accents, giving an overall lighthearted and joyful impression. The concluding rondo takes on a more somber, introspective tone, with delicate ornamentation in the violin melody and harmonically adventurous chromaticism. Significantly, the fourth movement contains melodic ideas later used in the finale of Beethoven's Third Symphony, the "*Eroica Symphony*," which has often been interpreted as representing a hero's journey.

## **Violin Sonata No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 45 (1886)**

**EDVARD GRIEG**

**Born in Bergen, Norway, June 15, 1843**

**Died in Bergen, Norway, September 4, 1907**

Edward Grieg, pianist from a young age, attained much public success for his chamber works across Scandinavia. Studying composition at the Leipzig Conservatory, Grieg interacted with many important figures within the Classical

music canon, including Clara Schumann and Carl Reinecke. His musical style brings together nationalistic elements of Norwegian folksong with Romantic Era harmonic language.

Grieg's lyricism and expertise with the piano are immediately apparent from the first movement of Violin Sonata No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 45. Dense, percussive piano chords support an exposed violin line that seemingly imitates the vulnerability of the human voice. At times, the violin almost seems to cry out on an accented fortissimo. Grieg also has an incredible sensitivity for musical pacing, as he matches the emotional depth with agitated, arpeggiated piano chords and then gently backs away on a delicate ritardando. Grieg's proclivity for song is further apparent from his expressive markings, as he frequently uses the term "cantabile," or "song-like" throughout both the violin and piano part. The second movement opens with piano alone, allowing the pianist to showcase the wide palette of colors that the instrument has to offer. This movement requires a gentle touch, as the pianist must bring out the melody while accenting the harmonic possibilities of the supporting accompaniment. Throughout this movement, Grieg brings in melodic configurations that borrow from the Nordic folksong tradition. In the final movement, Grieg pits a dramatic, dance-like theme against a slow and intimate lyrical theme to create a sonata form movement with great melodic and emotional contrast.

## **Violin Sonata No. 1 in A Major, Op. 13 (1877)**

**GABRIEL FAURÉ**

**Born in Pamiers, Ariège, May 12, 1845**

**Died in Paris, France, November 4, 1924**

Gabriel Fauré is a craftsman of melody, most remembered for his contributions to piano and vocal music. Steeped in the Classical music tradition from a young age, Fauré studied church music, including training on the organ, counterpoint, and choral music, at the Ecole Niedermeyer boarding school for 11 years. He rubbed elbows with many Classical music stars throughout his early career, including French composer Camille Saint-Saëns and Franz Liszt, and he worked as choirmaster for a variety of Parisian churches.

Violin Sonata No. 1 in A Major encapsulates Fauré's musical style in peak Romanticism, capitalizing on intense emotions and expressive melodies. The piece opens with a mesmerizing, winding piano line that builds to a lyrical violin passage. The movement seems to float throughout time, taking unexpected yet gentle harmonic and melodic turns. Much like the first movement, the melody of the second movement freely moves and twirls around itself; however, in this movement, the violin line seems to have a

continual forward momentum. For much of the movement, the melodic phrases are quite long, and it seems as if the violin is searching for a satisfying resting place. In contrast with the previous movement, the third movement is light and airy, with several short, pizzicato notes sprinkled throughout each phrase. The final movement continues the lighter mood, with off-beat accents in the piano accenting a dancelike 6/8 melody in the violin. The richness of the piano is fully explored through a variety of unexpected, arpeggiated chords, granting a nostalgic quality to the piece that is almost reminiscent of a child's music box. Overall, this intimate violin sonata explores a wide range of emotions and styles in a daring yet accessible manner.

—SARAH K. MILLER

## Music and the Body: Disabled Composers in the Classical Music Canon

SARAH K. MILLER

Each time we perform a piece of music, we imbue it with new layers of meaning. From the venue where we perform to the suits or gowns in which we perform them, we bring parts of ourselves and our identities to the music. The same can be said of musical analysis or commentary. In a discussion of sonata form, musicologist James Hepokoski argues that “to write about music is to write of our own experiences with it.”<sup>[1]</sup> Informed by this logic, I bring a personal reading of tonight's works. From my experiences as a disabled academic, I find it empowering to write musical narratives that reflect the diverse bodies of historic composers. As you may know, both Beethoven and Grieg were physically disabled at relatively young ages. Although Beethoven and Grieg maintain a privileged position in the Classical music canon alongside their Neurodivergent companion Fauré, their stigmatized statuses as disabled persons resulted in feelings of shame and at times hiding themselves away. Tonight, I hope to shine a light on the lesser-discussed facets of their disabled identities and celebrate their accomplishments within a lineage of disabled music-makers.

Beethoven is well-known as the prolific eighteenth-century composer who became deaf. The legend surrounding Beethoven conducting his Ninth Symphony, clueless to the exuberant applause, as his back was still to the audience, paints the man as pitiful and naïve. It is true that Beethoven struggled with his deafness, as he left behind many emotional records detailing the turmoil he faced as he lost the ability to hear—particularly in regard to how he feared the public may perceive him as a deaf composer. In a letter to his brothers—now known as the Heiligenstadt Testament—Beethoven declares that despite his current state of suffering and desperation, he decides to live for Art. Notably, Beethoven composed Violin Sonata No. 5 in F Major, Op. 24 during the early years of his hearing loss. That being said, Beethoven lived during a time when disabilities were seen as barriers to overcome or even as superpowers divinely gifted by God. Musicologist Joseph Straus challenges modern audiences to understand Beethoven's works “not in spite of his deafness, and not in triumph over his deafness, but rather because of his deafness.”<sup>[2]</sup> In other words, Beethoven's deafness is one facet of his identity and life experience that informed how he composed.

In 1860, Grieg was diagnosed with pleurisy, which is a disease that causes inflammation of the membranes within the lungs, and he suffered from respiratory complications throughout his life. Of course, his chronic illness resulted in complications outside of his health, and Grieg often lamented in his journal about his lack of professional productivity due to his lung condition. He later contracted tuberculosis, which caused further damage to his respiratory system. Throughout history, a disabled person's worth to society have largely been measured on their capitalistic contributions. Disability Studies scholar Simi Linton labels this as the “economic and social liability” model of disability, arguing that the disabled body is seen as a threat that drains social institutions.<sup>[3]</sup> Thanks to the work of disability activists Linton and countless others, we are now moving toward a “cultural model” of disability, which highlights the authentic life experience of disabled individuals, encouraging them to speak for themselves about the joys and injustices of being disabled. In alignment with the “cultural model” of disability, we can observe how Grieg's live experiences and talents culminated in his emotionally daring and beloved musical *oeuvre*.

Fauré was a passionate—though intense—man. For many years Fauré admired the beautiful Marianne Viardot, daughter of French dramatic mezzo-soprano Pauline Viardot. Eventually the two became engaged; however, after several months Marianne concerningly expressed adoration coupled with fear towards the man and broke it off. Fauré experienced much emotional turmoil from the loss, and it was only by the help of trusted friends that he was able to compose. For about a decade following the breakup, Fauré faced significant mental health struggles, and he self-identified as suffering from “spleen,” a diagnosis that roughly aligns with modern conceptions of depression. Much like Grieg, Fauré was critical of the rate at which he produced musical compositions. Even today, slowness is highly stigmatized in both personal and professional realms. This stigma has negative impacts on the lives of disabled individuals, as many require time-based accommodation. As a result, disability justice advocates have developed the Slow Movement, which celebrates everything from slowing down to cherish hobbies to slowly commuting to different locations.<sup>[4]</sup> Although only the story of Fauré's romantic drama followed by his struggle with depression remains, Violin Sonata No. 1 in A Major, Op. 13 captures Fauré at this moment in time, as he composed the work immediately after the conclusion of his relationship.

[1] James Hepokoski, *A Sonata Theory Handbook* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 2.

[2] Joseph Straus, *Extraordinary Measures: Disability in Music* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, date), 28.

[3] Simi Linton, *Claiming Disability: Knowledge and Identity* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1998), 37-70.

[4] See William Cheng, *Just Vibrations: The Purpose of Sounding Good* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 44-47.

— SARAH K. MILLER is a Ph.D. Candidate in Musicology at the University of California, Davis. Her research specialties include eighteenth-century *opera buffa*, *commedia dell'arte*, Gender Studies, and Disability Studies. She serves as the Co-Chair of the American Musicological Society's Music and Disability Study Group. In her free time, Sarah enjoys reading novels about Roman and Greek mythology and playing indie video games.

# About the Artists

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## Joshua Bell, violin

With a career spanning almost four decades, GRAMMY® Award-winning violinist Joshua Bell is one of the most celebrated artists of his era. Bell has performed with virtually every major orchestra in the world, and continues to maintain engagements as a soloist, recitalist, chamber musician, conductor and as the Music Director of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields.

Bell's highlights for the 2024-25 season include the release of two new albums: *Thomas De Hartmann Rediscovered*, featuring the World Premiere recording of Ukrainian composer Thomas De Hartmann's Violin Concerto, with conductor Dalia Stasevska and the INSO-Lviv Orchestra, released August 16, 2024 on Pentatone, as well as an album of Mendelssohn piano trios, which Bell recorded with longtime friends and collaborators Jeremy Denk and Steven Isserlis, out August 30, 2024 on Sony Masterworks. Bell will rejoin Denk and Isserlis in November 2024 for a series of Fauré chamber concerts at Wigmore Hall. He appears as guest soloist with the New York Philharmonic, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Bavarian Radio Symphony

Orchestra, and Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, as well as conducts and plays with the DSO Berlin.

Bell has commissioned and premiered works by John Corigliano, Edgar Meyer, Behzad Ranjbaran and Nicholas Maw. His recording of Maw's Violin Concerto received a GRAMMY® award, and his work on the film soundtrack for *The Red Violin* garnered Corigliano an Academy Award. In 2023-24, Bell introduced *The Elements*, a commissioned suite featuring movements by renowned composers Jake Heggie, Jennifer Higdon, Edgar Meyer, Jessie Montgomery, and Kevin Puts.

Bell has collaborated with peers including Renée Fleming, Daniil Trifonov, Emanuel Ax, Lang Lang, Chick Corea, Regina Spektor, Chris Botti, Anoushka Shankar, Dave Matthews, Josh Groban, and Sting, among others. He has appeared three times as a guest star on The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson and made numerous appearances on the Amazon series *Mozart in the Jungle*. His vast discography of 40 albums has garnered him GRAMMY®, Mercury®, Gramophone and OPUS KLASSIK awards.

Born in Bloomington, Indiana, Bell began playing the violin at age 4, and at age 12, began studies with his mentor, Josef Gingold. At age 14, Bell debuted with Riccardo Muti and the Philadelphia Orchestra, and made his Carnegie Hall debut at age 17 with the St. Louis Symphony. At age 18, Bell signed with his first label, London Decca, and received the Avery Fisher Career Grant. In the following decades, Bell has been nominated for six GRAMMY® awards, named "Instrumentalist of the Year" by Musical America, a "Young Global Leader" by the World Economic Forum, and has received the Avery Fisher Prize. He also received the 2003 Indiana Governor's Arts Award and in 2000 was named an "Indiana Living Legend."

Bell has performed for three American presidents and the justices of the Supreme Court of the United States. He participated in President Barack Obama's Committee on the Arts and Humanities' first cultural mission to Cuba, resulting in an Emmy-nominated PBS Live from Lincoln Center special.

Bell performs on the 1713 Huberman Stradivarius violin.



## Peter Dugan, piano

Peter Dugan's debut performances with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony were described by the *Los Angeles Times* as "stunning" and by the *SF Chronicle* as "fearlessly athletic." He is heard nationwide as the host of *NPR's* beloved program "From the Top". He has appeared as a soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician across North America and abroad. This year he makes his debuts at Wigmore Hall and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and can be heard as the piano soloist on a new release of Ives' Fourth Symphony from Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony, a recording which the *New York Times* named one of the top classical albums of 2019. Prizing versatility as the key to the future of classical music, Mr. Dugan is equally at home in classical, jazz, and pop idioms.

A sought-after multi-genre artist, Mr. Dugan has performed in duos and trios with artists ranging from Itzhak Perlman and Renee Fleming to Jesse Colin Young and Glenn Close. *The Wall Street Journal* described Mr. Dugan's collaboration with violinist Charles Yang as a "classical-meets-rockstar duo." Mr. Dugan has been presented in chamber music recitals by Carnegie Hall, Chamber Music Society of Palm Beach, Music at Menlo, Moab Music Festival, and recently in recital with Joshua Bell at the

Minnesota Beethoven Festival. He was the 2019 featured recitalist for the California Association of Professional Music Teachers, and has soloed with the San Francisco Symphony, Houston Symphony, Kansas City Symphony, New World Symphony, and Mid-Texas Symphony.

His debut album with baritone John Brancy - *A Silent Night: A WWI Memorial in Song* - pays homage to composers who lived through, fought in, and died in the Great War. Brancy and Dugan toured this program across North America in commemoration of the centennial of WWI, including performances at The Kennedy Center, Alice Tully Hall, Stanford University, the United States Naval Academy, and the Smithsonian Institute. Together Brancy and Dugan won first prize at the 2018 Montreal International Music Competition and second prize at the 2017 Wigmore Hall International Song Competition.

Mr. Dugan advocates the importance of music in the community and at all levels of society. As a founding creator of *Operation Superpower*, a superhero opera for children, he has travelled to dozens of schools in the greater New York area, performing for students and encouraging them to use their talents - their superpowers - for good.

Mr. Dugan holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees from The Juilliard School, where he studied under Matti Raekallio. He resides in New York City with his wife, mezzo-soprano Kara Dugan, and serves on the piano faculty at the Juilliard School Evening Division. Mr. Dugan is a Yamaha Artist.



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