Concert Program V:

Alla Zingarese

August 5 and 6

Friday, August 5
8:00 p.m., Stent Family Hall, Menlo School

Saturday, August 6
8:00 p.m., The Center for Performing Arts at Menlo-Atherton

PROGRAM OVERVIEW
A lifelong fascination with popular music of all kinds—especially the Gypsy folk music that Hungarian refugees brought to Germany in the 1840s—resulted in some of Brahms’s most captivating works. The music Brahms composed alla zingarese—in the Gypsy style—constitutes a vital dimension of his creative identity. Concert Program V surrounds Brahms’s lusty Hungarian Dances with other examples of composers drawing from Eastern European folk idioms, including the famous rondo “in the Gypsy style” from Joseph Haydn’s G Major Piano Trio; the Slavonic Dances of Brahms’s protégé Antonín Dvořák; and Maurice Ravel’s Tzigane, a paean to the Hungarian violin virtuoso Jelly d’Arányi. The program concludes with Brahms’s Opus 87 Piano Trio, whose plaintive second movement intones a traditional Hungarian folk lament.

SPECIAL THANKS
Music@Menlo dedicates these performances to the following individuals with gratitude for their generous support:
August 5: Nancy and DuBose Montgomery
August 6: Eileen and Joel Birnbaum

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN (1732–1809)
Rondo all’ongarese (Gypsy Rondo) from Piano Trio in G Major, Hob. XV: 25 (1795)
Jon Kimura Parker, piano; Elmar Oliveira, violin; David Finckel, cello

HERMANN SCHULENBERG (1886–1959)
Puszta-Märchen (Gypsy Romance and Czardas) (1936)

CHARLES ROBERT VALDEZ
Serenade du Tzigane (Gypsy Serenade)

ANONYMOUS
The Canary
Wu Han, piano; Paul Neubauer, viola

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)
Selected Hungarian Dances, WoO 1, Book 1 (1868–1869)
Hungarian Dance no. 1 in g minor; Hungarian Dance no. 6 in D-flat Major;
Hungarian Dance no. 5 in f-sharp minor
Wu Han, Jon Kimura Parker, piano

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (1841–1904)
Selected Slavonic Dances, opp. 46 (1878) and 72 (1886)
Slavonic Dance in D Major, op. 46, no. 6; Slavonic Dance in e minor, op. 72, no. 2;
Slavonic Dance in C Major, op. 46, no. 1
Jon Kimura Parker, Wu Han, piano

FRITZ KREISLER (1875–1962)
La gitana (1919)

HENRYK WIENIAWSKI (1835–1880)
Mazurka, op. 19, no. 2 (1860)

MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937)
Tzigane (1922–1924)
Wu Han, piano; Elmar Oliveira, violin

INTERMISSION

JOHANNES BRAHMS
Piano Trio in C Major, op. 87 (1880–1882)
Allegro moderato
Andante con moto
Scherezia: Presto
Finale: Allegro giocoso
Jon Kimura Parker, piano; Elmar Oliveira, violin; David Finckel, cello
Program Notes: Alla Zingarese

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN
(Born March 31, 1732, Rohrau, Lower Austria; died May 31, 1809, Vienna)
Piano Trio in G Major, Hob. XV: 25: III. Rondo all’ongarese
Composed: 1795
Other works from this period: Opus 71 and 74 string quartets (1793); Symphony no. 103 in E-flat Major, Drum Roll (1795); Symphony no. 104 in D Major, London (1795)
Approximate duration: 3 minutes

In 1761, at the tender age of twenty-nine, Joseph Haydn was appointed Vice-Kapellmeister to the prominent Hungarian Esterhazy family. This appointment would have a considerable effect not only on Haydn but on the entire history of Western music. The Esterhazys’ influence and substantial wealth would sustain Haydn for five decades and allow his talent and creativity to blossom with remarkable results. The support of the Esterhazys would also allow Haydn to experiment with new musical mediums, including the piano trio. Over the course of his career, Haydn would compose approximately forty-five piano trios, essentially creating the genre. Before Haydn, the piano trio was a piano-centric medium, with a violin obligatto and the cello doubling the left hand of the piano. In the G Major Piano Trio, we see Haydn’s remarkable innovations, with each instrument given an equal role.

In the 1790s, Haydn made two remarkably successful trips to London; he completed some of his finest symphonies (thereafter collectively known as the London Symphonies) during this period, achieving celebrity status largely on their merit. While in London, Haydn also composed several piano trios, including the G Major Piano Trio, whose final movement appears on this evening’s program. Subtitled Rondo all’ongarese (Gypsy Rondo), the piece exhibits folk themes that Haydn undoubtedly encountered while living and working in Hungary for the Esterhazy family.

A rondo is defined as a musical form that consists of a primary theme (A), which returns after various contrasting sections (B or C). A typical rondo follows the basic paradigm ABACA. The Rondo all’ongarese indeed exhibits these typical rondo characteristics, beginning with a jaunty and frenzied Gypsy tune in the sunny key of G major. This tune, which returns throughout the work, is juxtaposed with several “minor” episodes where the violin takes on a distinctly Gypsy flair.

–Isaac Thompson

HERMANN SCHULENBURG
(Born March 3, 1886; died January 4, 1959)
*Puszta-Märchen (Gypsy Romance and Czardas)*
Composed: 1936
Approximate duration: 4 minutes

CHARLES ROBERT VALDEZ
*Serenade du Tzigane (Gypsy Serenade)*
Approximate duration: 3 minutes

ANONYMOUS
*The Canary*
Approximate duration: 4 minutes

“Gypsies” came to be known in Europe as such because of the belief that they were descended from Egyptians. An itinerant people whose origins have been traced to northern India and whose Sanskrit-based native language, Romany, fragmented into many regional dialects across the continent, the Gypsies began their migrations as early as the fifth century BCE, when large numbers of them were brought to Persia to serve as musicians to King Bahram Gur. They followed the invading Turks into Europe in the fifteenth century and became more firmly established in Hungary and the Balkan lands, with smaller colonies from the Caucasus to Egypt and southern Spain. Indissoluble from Gypsy life and the place that it came to occupy in European culture was their music, whose exotic, gapped-scale melodies, scintillating rhythms, flamboyant performance style, and deep pathos gave rise to *cante flamenco* in Andalusia. It also created a tradition rich enough in Hungary that Franz Liszt, in the ten volumes of Hungarian Folk Melodies that he edited between 1839 and 1847 and the 450-page thesis on The Gypsies and Their Music in Hungary that he published in French(!) in 1859, even posited that Hungarian folk music had actually derived from that of the Gypsies. Though Hungarian ethnomusicologists soon proved that exactly the opposite was true—that the Gypsies actually assimilated the local idioms into their songs and methods of performance—the identification of Gypsy music with Hungary has remained undiminished. (So depressing was the error of Liszt’s idea to Hungarians that, when it was proposed after his death in 1886 to move his body from Bayreuth to Hungary, Prime Minister Kálmán Tisza at first objected: “Just at a time when Hungary was left with little more than its music, he proclaimed that this is not Hungarian music but Gypsy music…”.) Individual Gypsy fiddlers came into the employ of many Hungarian noblemen as early as the sixteenth century, and Gypsy bands (traditionally consisting of two violins, a bass, and a cimbalom) were established before the end of the eighteenth century; a Gypsy band from Galanta created a sensation in Vienna in the 1780s. The heyday of the Gypsy bands extended from the Hungarian Revolution of 1848–1849 to the outbreak of World War I, and their influence affected dance, folk, popular, theater, and symphonic music from Vienna to New York.

*Puszta-Märchen* was written in 1936 by the German composer and lyricist Hermann Schulenburg (1886–1959), who contributed music to a number of films during the 1930s and wrote numerous independent pieces in traditional European as well as more exotic styles, including *Bella Venezia (Beautiful Venice)*, *Chinesische Legende (Chinese Legend)*, and Legends [or perhaps Fairy Tales] of the Hungarian Plain, which bears the motto “The Gypsies played for me tonight.” *Puszta-Märchen*, subtitled Gypsy Romance and Czardas, comprises a soulful opening section of florid solo writing and a fiery close based on a Hungarian national dance.

Except for the attribution of the Gypsy Serenade, “Charles Robert Valdez” seems to have escaped any available biographical accounts, publishers’ catalogs, reference works, or recording archives. All the evidence for the provenance of the piece is associated with the Austrian-American violinist Fritz Kreisler (1875–1962), one of the most beloved performers of his generation and a skilled composer who enjoyed passing off some of his own numbers as authentic works by little-known Baroque and Classical composers. Kreisler had been playing the Gypsy Serenade on his recitals for some time when he included it in the Favorite Encore Folio that he edited for publication in 1916. He recorded the piece in May 1919 and it was published separately, with a dedication to him, in 1920; some later editions also cite his accompanist, Carl Lamson, as a collaborator with Valdez. Whoever its author, the Gypsy Serenade, with its sweetly lyrical outer sections framing an animated central episode, is a lovely souvenir of the salon music of a now-faded time.

*The Canary* is an anonymous piece based on Romanian folk songs, fitted with an avian cadenza by Paul Neubauer.

–Richard Rodda
JOHANNES BRAHMS  
(Born May 7, 1833, Hamburg; died April 3, 1897, Vienna)  

**Hungarian Dances nos. 1, 6, and 5, WoO 1, Book 1**  
Composed: 1868–1869  
Published: 1869  
First performance: Detailed in the notes below  
Other works from this period: Sonata in f minor for Two Pianos, op. 34b (1864); String Quartet in c minor, op. 51, no. 1 (1865–1873); Variations on a Theme by Haydn in B-flat Major, op. 56a (1873)  
Approximate duration: 9 minutes

Following the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, many Hungarian refugees made their way across Europe en route to the United States in search of greater political and social freedom. On their journey, many passed through Hamburg, Germany, where a young Johannes Brahms would be immediately taken with their culture and music. Brahms was particularly struck by the irregular rhythms and liberal rubato, or fluctuation of the tempo, which were so naturally a part of Hungarian folk music. Around 1850, Brahms would meet and befriend the Hungarian violinist Ede Reményi, who introduced the composer to several Gypsy folk tunes which he would later use in his Hungarian Dances.

Brahms completed his first book of Hungarian Dances in 1869 and first performed them in a private performance with none other than Clara Schumann at his side. A second book of Hungarian Dances would follow eleven years later in 1880. Immediately a commercial success, the dances had a dual appeal in that they could be performed both in a concert hall and in a home. This evening’s set begins with the first dance in g minor. Exhibiting exoticism from the first measures, the moody opening theme gives way to a frolicking Gypsy dance, replete with rubato. The colorful sixth dance highlights the whimsical and mischievous character that many Gypsy dances exhibit. The piece begins with a subdued yet playful opening contrasted against several forward-moving sections. This evening’s set ends with the fifth dance, arguably the most popular of Brahms’s Hungarian Dances. This capricious dance brilliantly juxtaposes sections of seriousness and playfulness. The Hungarian Dances were instantaneously popular and are some of Brahms’s most beloved works to this day.

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK  
(Born September 8, 1841, Nelahozeves; died May 1, 1904, Prague)  

**Slavonic Dances, op. 46, no. 6; op. 72, no. 2; op. 46, no. 1**  
Composed: 1878 (op. 46), 1886 (op. 72)  
Published: Detailed in the notes below  
First performance: 1878 in Dresden  
Other works from this period: String Quartet no. 10 in E-flat Major, op. 51 (1878–1879); Violin Concerto in a minor, op. 53 (1879); Symphony no. 6 in D Major, op. 60 (1880)  
Approximate duration: 15 minutes

In 1877, Antonín Dvořák, desperately low on money, applied for an Austrian State Stipend. During this process, Dvořák caught the attention of Johannes Brahms, who was serving as a judge for the grant. So impressed was Brahms with Dvořák’s music (particularly his set of Moravian duets for two vocalists and piano) that he immediately wrote to his publisher Fritz Simrock on Dvořák’s behalf:

> [F]or several years I have enjoyed works sent in by Antonín Dvořák...of Prague. This year he has sent works including a volume of ten duets for two sopranos and piano, which seem to me very pretty and a practical proposition for publishing...Play them through and you will like them as much as I do. As a publisher, you will be particularly pleased with their piqunacy...Dvořák has written all manner of things: operas (Czech), symphonies, quartets, piano pieces. In any case, he is a very talented man. Moreover, he is poor! I ask you to think about it! The duets will show you what I mean and could be a “good article.”

Simrock, similarly enthusiastic about Dvořák’s Moravian vocal duets, quickly commissioned a set of Slavonic dances for piano, four hands. When the Opus 46 Slavonic Dances were published in 1878, they were an immediate hit with the public. The critic Louis Elhert reportedly told Dvořák that the publishing led to “a positive assault on sheet music shops.” Within several months, the Slavonic Dances had been performed from New York to London and had solidified Dvořák’s burgeoning fame. At the urging of Simrock, who had made a handsome profit from the popularity of the Opus 46 set, Dvořák would compose another set of Slavonic Dances (op. 72) in 1886. Ever grateful for the invaluable introduction to Simrock, Dvořák would remain close friends with Brahms until the latter composer’s death in 1897.

Unlike Brahms’s Hungarian Dances, Dvořák’s Slavonic Dances do not quote specific folk melodies. Having been immersed in Czech folk music from an early age, Dvořák drew upon these influences in composing the Slavonic Dances. The Opus 46 Number 6 dance is a traditional waltz, or sousedská. The piece begins with a calm and lilting theme, interspersed with contrasting sections with faster and more rustic qualities. The Opus 72 Number 2 dance is a dumka, or melancholic Ukrainian dance. The piece begins with a tranquil opening theme, which eventually gives way to a subtle and charming middle section. This evening’s set closes with the first dance of the Opus 46 Slavonic Dances. This Presto in the sunny key of C major is an exuberant dance exhibiting several complex cross-rhythms. The popularity of the Slavonic Dances has not waned since their initial publication, and they, too, have since become Dvořák’s most beloved compositions.

FRITZ KREISLER  
(Born February 2, 1875, Vienna; died January 29, 1962, New York)  

**La gitana**  
Composed: 1919  
Approximate duration: 3 minutes

HENRYK WIENIAWSKI  
(Born July 10, 1835, Lublin, Poland; died March 31, 1880, Moscow)  

**Mazurka, op. 19, no. 2**  
Composed: 1860  
Approximate duration: 4 minutes

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many performers (particularly violinists) moonlighted as composers, supplementing their concert programs with short, crowd-pleasing works that highlighted their virtuosic or lyrical capabilities. In this tradition, violinists such as Henryk Wieniawski, Pablo de Sarasate, Ole Bull, Eugène Ysaÿe, Fritz Kreisler, and others created a remarkable body of short works that have become jewels of the violin repertoire.

Composed in 1919, La gitana is characteristic of Kreisler’s output in that it emulates a particular style—Kreisler wrote numerous short pieces in the style of other composers. With a distinctive Spanish flair, La gitana pays tribute to the music of the Gitanos (Gypsies), or Romaní people who settled in Spain. The piece begins with a cadenza for the violin punctuated by sharp chords in the piano. With its rhapsodic flair, this opening is a call to the dance that follows. In the second section, the piano begins, with the violin entering with a rather sultry
tune. In the middle section of the work, the violin’s lyrical qualities are put in the limelight with a gorgeous melody in the most singing register of the instrument. The piece ends in a flourish with a return of the opening cadenza. Kreisler, known for his beautiful sound and phrasing, undoubtedly took great pleasure in performing this delightful work.

Henryk Wieniawski was considered one of the greatest violinists of the nineteenth century. Born in Poland, Wieniawski spent much of his life touring the world, dazzling audiences with his remarkable virtuosity. The intensity of Wieniawski’s vibrato would prompt the young Fritz Kreisler to describe it as being “brought to heights never before achieved.” Though his career spanned several continents, Wieniawski never lost his Polish roots. In the Opus 19 mazurkas, he uses this decidedly Polish dance form to pay homage to his home country. The Opus 19 Number 2 Mazurka, entitled Le ménétrier, or The Fiddler, begins with soft pizzicato chords before thrusting into a rustic dance, perhaps mimicking Polish Gypsy fiddlers. A contrasting section of subdued lyricism is featured before the jaunty, stomping dance returns.

MAURICE RAVEL
(Born March 7, 1875, Ciboure, Basses-Pyrénées, France; died December 28, 1937, Paris)

Tzigane, Concert Rhapsody for Violin and Piano
Composed: 1922–1924
Dedication: Detailed in the notes below
First performance: Detailed in the notes below
Other works from this period: Ravel’s orchestration of Mussorgsky’s Pictures at an Exhibition (1922); L’enfant et les sortilèges (1920–1925); Violin Sonata no. 2 in G Major (1922–1927)
Approximate duration: 10 minutes

In the early 1920s, Ravel heard Hungarian violinist Jelly d’Arányi perform his Sonata for Violin and Cello in London and was very taken with her playing and Gypsy flair. According to an account from pianist Gaby Casadesus, “late in the evening Ravel asked the Hungarian violinist to play some Gypsy melodies. After Mlle. d’Arányi obliged, the composer asked for one more melody, and then another. The Gypsy melodies continued until about five a.m., with everyone exhausted except the violinist and the composer.” Ravel’s interaction with d’Arányi would serve as the inspiration for the Tzigane, which was subsequently premiered by her in London with pianist Henri Gil-Marchex in April of 1924. By numerous accounts, the premiere was a sensation.

Tzigane begins with an extended pseudo-improvisatory solo for the violin marked by a distinctive dotted-rhythm figure. This solo becomes more and more rhapsodic, employing several virtuosic violin techniques including double-stops (playing more than one note simultaneously), harmonics (manipulating the violin string to create a higher pitched, whistling sound), and left-hand pizzicato. The violin solo continues uninterrupted until the piano enters with its own virtuosic cadenza. With the violin and piano now musically “introduced,” the piece becomes a collaborative affair highlighted by what Michael Steinberg describes as a “whirlwind of peppery, seductive dance tunes.” These dance tunes are revealed in a series of episodes, each building on a theme that is first presented in the piano. In the final minute or so of the piece, the dance reaches a fever pitch and propels to one of the most exciting endings in the repertoire. The Tzigane is a formidable virtuosic challenge for violinists and highlights Ravel’s remarkable sense of color and imagination.

JOHANNES BRAHMS
Piano Trio in C Major, op. 87
Composed: 1880–1882
Published: 1882
First performance: December 29, 1882, in Frankfurt, with violinist Hugo Heermann, cellist Bernhard Müller, and the composer at the piano
Other works from this period: Detailed in the notes below
Approximate duration: 28 minutes

For much of his life, Johannes Brahms would escape the stifling Vienna summer and take refuge in various locations around the serene Austrian countryside. In 1880, he visited the resort village of Bad Ischl and immediately found solace in the fresh mountain air of this lovely town nestled in the Alps east of Salzburg. He would return numerous times in the following years, enjoying the company of artists and the splendid weather. The idyllic Bad Ischl setting furthermore proved agreeable to Brahms’s creative impulse; his summers there spawned considerable work on a string of masterpieces including the Third Symphony, the Second Piano Concerto, and the F Major Viola Quintet.

Brahms began composing the C Major Trio in 1880. In June of that year, he showed his friend Theodor Billroth the first movement of the trio, to which Billroth responded: “If these movements and perhaps more were composed at.Ischl, you must be in your best form. How easily the music runs on!” The C Major Trio would take Brahms two years to complete and elicited an uncharacteristic pride in the often self-effacing composer. After its completion in 1882, Brahms wrote to his publisher Simrock in Berlin, “You have not yet had such a beautiful trio from me and very likely have not published one equal to it in the last ten years.”

The piece begins with the violin and cello stating the lyrical first theme, which becomes the basis for the entire movement. In the development section, we see Brahms’s mastery of sonata form come to full fruition with numerous complex transformations of the opening theme. The Andante con moto highlights the composer’s rhapsodic tendencies with a set of five variations on a Gypsy melody. The theme, in the parallel key of a minor, is first presented in octave unison in the violin and cello. In the variations, Brahms utilizes the technique of double-stops to create a heavy texture, which provides a rustic earthiness evocative of nineteenth-century Gypsies. The scherzo, cast in the key of c minor, invokes the spirit of Mendelssohn in his nimble delicacy. An utterly romantic and lyrical middle section contrasts interestingly with the acuate rhythms of the opening. The finale, marked Allegro giocoso, is a compact tour de force of intense playfulness. Returning to the key of C major, this inventive movement builds to a noble conclusion.

—Isaac Thompson