

UPCOMING EVENTS

ALL OF US: SCHOLARSHIP BENEFIT CONCERT
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29 AT 7:30 P.M.
GREAT HALL, GBPAC

SPOTLIGHT SERIES:
NORTHERN IOWA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11 AT 7:30 P.M.
GREAT HALL, GBPAC

THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC CALENDAR OF EVENTS IS
AVAILABLE ONLINE AT MUSIC.UNI.EDU/EVENTS.

In consideration of the performers and other members of the audience, please enter or leave a performance at the end of a composition. Cameras and recording equipment are **not permitted**. Please turn off all electronic devices, and be sure that all emergency contact cell phones and pagers are set to silent or vibrate. In the event of an emergency, please use the exit nearest to you. Please contact the usher staff if you need assistance.

This event is **free** to all UNI students, courtesy of the Panther Pass Program.

The University of Northern Iowa honors the ancestral stewards of the land on which our university rests. Through the work we do every day to live our mission, the University of Northern Iowa aspires for you to see a community that: honors Native and Indigenous People and culture, lives the 7th Generation Principle, does good for the people and communities we serve, and embraces stewardship of our mission and land. Please see our full stewardship statement at president.uni.edu/stewardship-statement.

Performances like this are made possible through private support from patrons like you! Please consider contributing to School of Music scholarships or guest artist programs. Call 319-273-3915 or visit www.uni.edu/music to make your gift.



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Betwixt Bach

THE SIX SONATAS AND PARTITAS
FOR SOLO VIOLIN OF J.S. BACH
IN CYCLE WITH 'BETWIXT BACH'
BY ELLIOTT MILES MCKINLEY

ERIK ROHDE, VIOLIN



September 21, 6 p.m.; September 22, 6 and 8 p.m.

Davis Hall, Gallagher Bluedorn

PART I

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 AT 6 P.M.

Betwixt Bach (2021) Elliott Miles McKinley (b. 1969)

I. Prelude: Aria

Sonata No. 1 in G minor, BWV 1001 J.S. Bach
I. Adagio (1685 – 1750)
II. Fuga (Allegro)
III. Siciliana
IV. Presto

II. After G Minor

Partita No. 1 in B minor, BWV 1002 J.S. Bach
I. Allemanda – Double
II. Corrente – Double (Presto)
III. Sarabande – Double
IV. Tempo di Borea – Double

III. After B Minor

Erik Rohde, solo violin

PART II

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22 AT 6 P.M.

Betwixt Bach (2021) Elliott Miles McKinley (b. 1969)

Sonata No. 2 in A minor, BWV 1003 J.S. Bach
I. Grave
II. Fuga
III. Andante
IV. Allegro

IV. After A Minor

Partita No. 2 in D minor, BWV 1004 J.S. Bach
I. Allemanda
II. Corrente
III. Sarabanda
IV. Giga
V. Ciaccona

V. After D Minor

Erik Rohde, solo violin

PART III

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22 AT 8 P.M.

Betwixt Bach (2021) Elliott Miles McKinley (b. 1969)

Sonata No. 3 in C major, BWV 1005 J.S. Bach

- I. Adagio
- II. Fuga
- III. Largo
- IV. Allegro assai

VI. After C Major

Partita No. 3 in E major, BWV 1006 J.S. Bach

- I. Preludio
- II. Loure
- III. Gavotte en rondeau
- IV. Menuet I – Menuet II
- V. Bourrée
- VI. Gigue

VII. After E Major

VIII. Aria: Epilogue

Erik Rohde, solo violin

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Dr. Erik Rohde maintains a diverse career as a conductor, violinist, and educator, and has performed in recitals and festivals across the United States and in Europe and Asia. He is the recently appointed Director of Orchestral Activities at the University of Northern Iowa, the Music Director of the Winona Symphony Orchestra (MN), and the founding artistic director of the Salomon Chamber Orchestra, an orchestra dedicated to promoting the works of living composers and of Haydn and his contemporaries. Prior to his appointment at the University of Northern Iowa, Rohde served as the Director of String Activities and Orchestra at Indiana State University where he conducted the Indiana State University Symphony Orchestra and taught violin, chamber music, and Suzuki pedagogy.

A committed advocate for contemporary music, he has premiered and commissioned many new works by both established and young composers, and is constantly seeking to discover new compositional voices. He is the violinist of the new music duo *sonic apricity*, which is dedicated to uncovering and commissioning new works by living composers for violin and viola. At Indiana State University he helped to host the annual Contemporary Music Festival – now running for over 50 years. He has worked with Joan Tower, Augusta Read Thomas, Libby Larsen, Meira Warshauer, Elliott Miles McKinley, Christopher Walczak, Michael-Thomas Foumai, Pierre Jalbert, James Dillon, David Dzubay, Marc Mellits, Carter Pann, Narong Prangcharoen and countless others. In the last year he has released two recordings with composer Elliott Miles McKinley, with whom he is currently working on a project for a new set of companion pieces written to be played with the Bach Solo Violin Sonatas and Partitas.

In his native Minnesota, Rohde has served as the Music Director of the Buffalo Community Orchestra, conductor and violinist for the Contemporary Music Workshop, Camarata Suzuki orchestra conductor for the MacPhail Center for Music, String Ensemble conductor at the Trinity School, and first violinist of the Cantiamo and Enkidu String Quartets. Rohde holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts in Conducting from the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities, where he studied with conductors Mark Russell Smith, Kathy Saltzman Romey, and Craig Kirchoff and violin pedagogue Mark Bjork. He also holds degrees in Violin Performance and Biomedical Engineering.

Rohde resides in Cedar Falls, IA with his wife Erin and their children.

PROGRAM NOTES

In 1720, Bach completed his monumental Six Solos for Violin without Bass accompaniment. They are with little dispute considered the pinnacle of the repertoire for solo violin, and have inspired many solo violin works after them, none of which are as often performed or inspire such universal devotion by violinists. For me they have represented a journey of more than 20 years of study (so far!), and I have a personal love for this music that runs deep and only deepens with each playing.

J.S. Bach was known in his lifetime as the master of the organ and harpsichord, but he was also a formidable violinist and of course his status today as one of the primary composers in history is unquestioned. For virtually his whole life he worked for the church, and though these pieces come from the one season in his life that he worked for a secular court, that sacred/secular distinction seemed to have not mattered to Bach. He would freely re-use music from secular pieces in his most devout and sacred works and vice versa. After all, it was he who said "The aim and final end of all music should be none other than the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul."

The works being presented tonight are divided into two sets of three: three more formal 'church' sonatas, and three 'dance' partitas. The sonatas all follow a similar pattern: a slow introductory first movement, then a fugue, a lyric third movement, and a fast finale. The partitas are more varied, each taking inspiration from sets of baroque dances. The one notable outlier is the monumental Chaconne, found at the end of the second partita. Though the connection is debated, Bach's first wife died quite suddenly the year these were written, and it has been suggested that the Chaconne is his musical memorial to his first wife. The Chaconne is based on an old form meant to indicate lament, and in it, Bach explores all manner of emotional grief. We can't know for certain if that's what he intended, but it is a convincing hypothesis.

Even though these are secular works, it has been suggested by the German violinist and musicologist Helga Thoene that below

the surface, they are laced with the outlines of chorale tunes which he would have known so well. Again this is hotly debated, but even if Bach wasn't intending to do so, he would have been so immersed in the chorale melodies of his day that it is easy to see how they could have naturally influenced his other music. What we do know is that the fugue subject from the final sonata (C Major) is almost directly lifted from the chorale *Komm, Heiliger Geist* (Come, Holy Ghost), which he also set in a chorale prelude later in his career. What is interesting about this theory is not just that Bach may have hidden chorale melodies in this music, but that within each sonata, the chorale tunes are liturgically linked to 1: Christmas, 2: the Passion and Easter, and 3: Pentecost (which would correlate to the chorale tune mentioned above). Again, it is not readily perceivable from just listening to the music, but it does give you something to think about narratively in the three sonatas.

There is no evidence that Bach intended for these works to ever be performed as a cycle, but the idea to perform them as a huge set always appealed to me. 2020 being the 300th anniversary of the works gave me the excuse to play them as one huge cycle for the first time in a concert fortunately scheduled for February of 2020. Prior to this, I had spoken with my friend, composer Elliott Miles McKinley about creating "linking" pieces to frame the Bach and transform it into a true cycle, and *Between Bach* is the result of his labors. Elliott's music is intended not to quote the Bach but to pay homage to this colossal work. They are thus written in his own musical language and they form their own Suite which can also be played without all of Bach's music. What is powerful is that they link all of the pieces together into one huge tapestry, and the epilogue forms a fitting summary and culmination to both Bach and McKinley's music.

Bach would sometimes write the initials "J.J." at the top of his manuscripts, which stood for "Jesu, Juva," Latin for "Jesus, help!" Each time I embark on this journey I feel much the same way. This is an epic undertaking, and my process of living with these pieces is certainly not over yet. I am deeply honored and humbled to be able to share this incredible music with you, and hope that this performance indeed can fulfill Bach's vision for all music. Thank you for joining me on this journey.