**Program Notes**

The **Fourth Violin Sonata** in a minor, Opus 23, was composed in 1800, not long after the first set of three violin sonatas published as Opus 12, and immediately before the more famous “Spring” sonata, Opus 24. Beethoven was in the first decade of his fame, concertizing widely and enjoying the fruits of his early labors. He was a frequent guest in the houses of the Viennese nobility, although his public behavior, unpredictable to say the least and sometimes even threatening, was beginning to show the strain of his increasing deafness. The first symptoms appeared probably in 1797 or 1798, although he didn’t mention them in any letters until 1801. His music at this time, however, remained sunny and light, and the minor violin sonata is no exception. Its form is unique, with a presto first movement, a fully developed sonata form second movement rather than the traditional slow movement, and a third movement rondo with episodes of unusual length relationships.

~ written by Gabe Langfur

I composed **Partita for Violin and Piano** in the Autumn of 1984 at the request of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra for Pinchas Zukerman and Marc Neikrug.

The works consists of five movements. Of these, the main movements are the first (Allegro guisto), the third (Largo) and the fifth (Presto). The second and fourth are but short interludes to be played ad libitum. A short ad libitum section also appears before the end of the last movement.

The three major movements follow, rhythmically at least, the tradition of pre-classical (18th century) keyboard music. This, however, is no more than an allusion. Harmonically and melodically, Partita clearly belongs to the same group of recent compositions as Symphony No. 3 and Chain 1.

Pinchas Zukerman and Marc Neikrug gave the first performance on 18th January 1985 at the Ordway Music Theatre, St. Paul, Minnesota.

~ written by Witold Lutoslawski

The years during and just after World War I marked the height of an expressionist period in Béla Bartók’s compositional development. Though some works of the time still projected the folk style and quoted the eastern-European folk tunes that were central to Bartók’s activities before the war, the compositions of the late nineteen-teens and early twenties featured increasingly dense harmonic vocabularies, inspired by modernist trends in the music of Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Debussy and Ravel. Works such as Bartók’s pantomime the *Miraculous Mandarin* and his two violin sonatas represent a culmination of this modernist harmonic turn, featuring passages that routinely present all or most of the twelve chromatic tones. Yet despite the complexity (or as Bartók described it, the “difficulty”) of these works, Bartók asserted that they retained “traces of tonality.” In the case of the **Second Violin Sonata**, composed between July and November of 1922, Bartók declared the work to be in C, though it is sometimes difficult to discern what, beyond its ultimate close on the three notes of a C-major triad, supports the claim.

Formally, the work comprises two movements played without pause: a moderate-tempo, rhapsodic first movement based on a lyrical theme that serves as a recurring motto; and a faster tempo, more vigorous dance-like second movement. While the sonata dose not quote any specific folk material, the slow-then-fast two-movement structure recalls the characteristic tempo contrast of the Verbunkos, a military recruiting dance that became incorporated into Hungarian instrumental music of the nineteenth century. The work was first performed in Berlin on February 7, 1923, with the composer at the piano and Imre Waldbauer on violin. On May 7, 1023, Bartók again performed the work (together with the first violin sonata) in London with the work’s dedicatee, Jelly Arányi.

~ written by Professor Ed Gollin