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Romances for Violin

by BEETHOVEN · SAINT-SAËNS
DVOŘÁK · BRUCH · SVENDSEN



Davide Alogna *violin*

Karşıyaka Municipality Chamber Orchestra · Hakan Şensoy *conductor*

Romances for Violin

Ludwig van Beethoven 1770-1827

1 Romanze in F Op.50 8'14

2 Romanze in G Op.40 7'08

Camille Saint-Saëns 1835-1921

3 Romance in C Op.48 6'57

4 Romance in D flat Op.37 5'59

Antonín Dvořák 1841-1907

5 Romance in F minor Op.11 10'59

Max Bruch 1838-1920

6 Romance in F Op.85 8'43

Johan Svendsen 1840-1911

7 Romanza in G Op.26 7'34

Davide Alogna *violin*

Karşıyaka Municipality Chamber Orchestra

Hakan Şensoy *conductor*

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Romance: what's in a name?

The romance is a distinctive genre in music. Although it may often seem interchangeable with other kinds of compositions such as the serenade, the berceuse or even the 'lamento', we tend to identify the term 'Romance' as identifying a composition for solo instrument with piano or ensemble accompaniment, characterised by an intimate or even a melancholic tone. More than simply a form, the term Romance signifies a transition between Classical and Romantic eras and styles. Leaving aside early examples from the French Rococo tradition, illustrious examples were composed by Mozart in 1781 (the third movement of the 'Gran Partita' Serenade K361) and Haydn in 1785 (the second movement of Symphony No.85, 'La Reine'). However, the Romance comes into its own during the Romantic period of the 19th century.

How does the instrumental Romance differ from its ancestor, the vocal Romance? The latter is commonly a short piece for voice and piano, typified by a stereotyped mood, a pastoral setting, often a low artistic value but entertaining nonetheless. Vocal Romances supplanted 'arie da salotto' as the dominant genre of vocal chamber composition in the 19th century. The 'Aria da salotto' entertained the nobility, while Romances were written with the rising bourgeoisie in mind: a social and political evolution captured in the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Defining the instrumental Romance is more of a task. The *Lied ohne Worte* often becomes a 'romanza senza parole' in Italian or 'romance sans paroles' in French, misunderstanding the import of the original German term through literal translation. John Field named some of his Nocturnes as 'Romances', though there is little to distinguish between his approach to one and the other form. Instrumental romances do not share with the Vocal Romance the quality of accessibility to the bourgeois consumer. Quite the contrary: the virtuosic flourishes of their solo parts often make technical beyond the reach of amateur musicians.

Perhaps, then, we should search not for compositional unity or a formal tradition in the Romance, but rather for the meaning behind the term: an expression of the voice of Romanticism, a struggling, desperate, intimate and passionately loving voice, such as we may appreciate in the cantabile lines of Davide Alogna's playing. His selection of Romances for violin and orchestra follows the principle of variety. To follow the Apollonian purity of Beethoven's two exemplary works, contrasts abound: in the lush sentimentality of Bruch's F major Romance (originally for viola and orchestra), the fresh Slavonic rhythms of Dvořák's F minor Romance, the refined yearning of two Romances by Saint-Saëns and the cool beauty of Svendsen's G major Romance. Forget, for now, the world of scholarly monographs and attention-grabbing revivals and premieres, and enjoy a sequence of great composers writing with tranquillity foremost in mind.

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Davide Alogna graduated in violin and piano from the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatoire in Como and furthered his studies at the Conservatoire de Paris, obtaining his Masters with a 'Premier Prix à l'Unanimité'. After studies at Accademia Chigiana of Siena, his teacher Giuliano Carmignola described him as 'an amazing talent'. In 2017 he played as a soloist with the chamber orchestra of La Scala, Milan, having already given concerts at Carnegie Hall, the Berlin Philharmonie, Tokyo's Suntory Hall, the Smetana Hall of Prague and many other prestigious venues worldwide, where he has been accompanied by distinguished ensembles such as the Orchestra da Camera di Mantova, Munich Kammerphilharmonie, Chamber Orchestra of New York, Mexico State Symphony and Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra, appearing alongside colleagues such as Natalia Gutman, Eliso Virsaladze, Jeffrey Swann, Bruno Canino, Roberto Prosseda, Roberto Plano and Giulio Tampalini.

Davide Alogna began his solo career in 2009 with the Prix d'Interprétation Musicale at the Cité Universitaire de Paris. Since then he has specialised in promoting 20th-century Italian repertoire; notably the violin music of Ottorino Respighi, making recordings and giving several national premieres. Edizioni Curci has invited him to make the first recordings of several works by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, such as the Third Concerto which received glowing reviews in many international musical magazines. The *Amadeus* and *Suonare* publications have also featured him as a cover artist on several occasions.

Davide Alogna is Professor of Violin at the Francesco Cilea Conservatoire in Reggio Calabria. He performs on the 'Ex Wilhelmj' Carlo Antonio Testore violin of 1715.

Born in Istanbul, **Hakan Şensoy** studied with Ayhan Turan and gave his first recital in 1984. Since that time he has appeared as both soloist and conductor at Carnegie Hall, the Musikverein, Teatro alla Scala and elsewhere throughout Europe.

The Istanbul Philharmonic Society awarded him the 'Most Successful Young Artist of the Year' in 1985, when he was also recognised with an 'Outstanding Achievement in Art' award from the ITU Rector. Having graduated from the ITU Institute of Social Sciences in 1992 he became guest concertmaster of the Çukurova State Symphony Orchestra for its 1992-93 season. He continued his studies with Ayla Erduran and with the noted violinist and pedagogue Victor Pikaisen. From 2000 to 2003 he served as concertmaster of the Cemal Reşit Rey Symphony Orchestra, and of the Akbank Chamber Orchestra between 1996 and 2011. He founded the Milli Reasürans Chamber Orchestra, the Istanbul Chamber Orchestra and the Philharmonia Istanbul.

Hakan Şensoy continues to promote art music in Turkey with regular appearances on radio and TV as both a producer and commentator, and has made many first recordings of music by Turkish composers. As a conductor he studied with Demirhan Altuğ between 1981 and 1987 before working with Emin Güven Yaşlıçam and attending Gianluigi Gelmetti's conducting course at the Fondazione Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena in 2003. He has accompanied the likes of Sholomo Mintz, Fazıl Say, Steven Isserlis, Adrian Brendel and Peter Jablonsky and worked across the world with the Terence Blanchard Band, the Bee Gees Band, Dreamtone & Iris Mavraki's Neverland and George Benson. He remains the only Turkish conductor to have appeared at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan.

Hakan Şensoy became Music Director of the Chamber Orchestra of Karşıyaka Municipality as of 2015, and became General Director of Izmir State Symphony Orchestra for the 2018-19 season. He is an assistant professor at the ITU Turkish Traditional Music State Conservatoire.