



# AMERICAN CLASSICS



## THREE AMERICAN VIOLIN SONATAS

**Harbison • Schoenfeld • Stucky**

**Bernstein: Canon for Aaron**

**Cho-Liang Lin, Violin • Jon Kimura Parker, Piano**



## Three American Violin Sonatas

**Paul Schoenfeld (b. 1947):  
Violin Sonata (2009)**

1	I. Vanishing Point	6:15
2	II. Intermezzo	7:14
3	III. Romanza	4:27
4	IV. Freilach	5:30

**Steven Stucky (1949–2016):  
Violin Sonata (2013)**

5	I. Calmo	6:52
6	II. Interlude	4:38
7	III. Scherzo – Finale	7:26

**John Harbison (b. 1938):  
Violin Sonata No. 1 (2011)**

8	I. Sinfonia	4:29
9	II. Intermezzo	3:10
10	III. Aria	2:23
11	IV. Rondo – V. Poscritto	4:37

**Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990):  
Canon for Aaron (1970)**

2:35

**Paul Schoenfeld (b. 1947) • Steven Stucky (1949–2016) • John Harbison (b. 1938)  
Three American Violin Sonatas**

Paul Schoenfeld, Steven Stucky and John Harbison each wrote a *Violin Sonata* at my behest. It was a privilege to work on the premieres with these three great composers alongside my pianist colleague Jon Kimura Parker. Sadly, Steven Stucky is no longer with us. Jon and I wish to dedicate this album to the memory of this dear friend.

**Cho-Liang Lin**

**Paul Schoenfeld (b. 1947): Violin Sonata (2009)**  
*Premiere: 21 August 2009, La Jolla, California*

Paul Schoenfeld (b. 1947, Detroit) began studying piano at six and wrote his first composition the following year – he later studied piano with Rudolf Serkin, Julius Chajes, and Ozan Marsh. Schoenfeld received his Doctorate in Musical Arts from the University of Arizona (at age 22) after earning his undergraduate degree at Carnegie Mellon University. He then worked for several years in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul area as a freelance composer and pianist before serving on the faculty of The University of Akron from 1988 to 1993. After several years devoting himself to composition while dividing his time between Israel and the US, he returned to teaching at the Cleveland Institute of Music in 2007–08, and joined the faculty of the University of Michigan in September 2008. A man of many interests, Paul Schoenfeld is also an avid scholar of mathematics and Hebrew. Schoenfeld wrote:

“The *Sonata for Violin and Piano* was begun in the fall of 2008 and completed the following spring. It’s a 20-minute work consisting of four movements: *Vanishing Point*, *Intermezzo*, *Romanza* and *Freilach*.

*Vanishing Point*, the title of a novel by David Markson, strongly reflects that author’s influence. Short comments and particular assertions (here musical motifs) are stated which through various references integrate snippets into an anecdotal whole.

The *Intermezzo* is a through-composed movement, very Sibelius-like in procedure. As the movement unfolds, new music is constantly being generated from what was previously heard.

Much of the *Romanza*’s material is based on a violin/piano piece I was drafting in my late teens. The work was never completed and the sketches have long since disappeared. Nevertheless, a six-tone, Berg-like motive and one of the melodic lines became instilled in my memory and permeate the movement.

*Freilach* is a Yiddish word denoting a joyous song or dance. This movement is a rondo that combines Gypsy violin writing, a Transylvanian wedding song, and well-known 18th-century contrapuntal devices.”

**Steven Stucky (1949–2016): Violin Sonata (2013)**  
*Premiere: 16 August 2013, La Jolla, California*

Steven Stucky (1949–2016) was born in Hutchinson, Kansas, raised in Abilene, Texas, and studied at Baylor and Cornell Universities. Stucky taught at Lawrence University in Wisconsin from 1978 to 1980, when he joined the faculty of Cornell University, where he founded the new music group Ensemble X and served as Given Foundation Professor of Composition until his retirement in 2014 – he also taught at Aspen Music Festival, Eastman School of Music, and the University of California, Berkeley. Stucky’s compositions have been widely performed throughout the US and abroad by leading chamber ensembles and symphony orchestras, many written on commissions from major orchestras, National Endowment for the Arts, Yale University, and other organizations. Stucky was composer-in-residence with the Los Angeles Philharmonic from 1988 to 2009, and hosted the New York Philharmonic’s Hear & Now concert series from 2005 until 2009. In addition to composing, Stucky was also active as a conductor, writer, lecturer,

and contributor to music journals in America and Britain; he won the ASCAP Foundation Deems Taylor/Virgil Thomson Award for his 1981 book *Lutosławski and His Music*. In addition to being awarded the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for Music for his *Second Concerto for Orchestra*, Stucky's other distinctions included the ASCAP Victor Herbert Prize, First Prize from the American Society of University Composers, and membership of both the American Academy of Arts and Letters and American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Stucky wrote of his *Sonata for Violin and Piano*:

"My head is full of violin sonatas I love, especially by Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms, but for me the violin sonata to reckon with is the Debussy, one of the most original and compelling works ever written. The Debussy *Violin Sonata* is a work far too sui generis to inspire direct imitation, but it can at least suggest a certain balanced interaction between, on the one hand, a musical narrative that seems improvised, fantastic, and wilful, and on the other, principles of construction that seem almost classical. That is a combination still worth pursuing.

The main movements of my *Sonata* are the first and third. The first movement alternates slow sections, calm and lyrical, with faster ones: active, busy music that is sometimes forceful, sometimes playful. The third movement (*Scherzo-Finale*) begins as a skittish, fragmentary *scherzo* before embarking on two other, contrasting ideas: a fiery *Allegro (con fuoco)* ["with fire"]) and a slower, wistful melody. When the faster coda arrives, it too turns wistful for a moment before finishing with brusque confidence. Between these larger movements, which run about seven minutes each, comes something like a sketch for a slow movement: too short to serve as much more than a linking *Interlude*, but nevertheless developing a surprising depth of feeling."

**John Harbison (b. 1938):  
Violin Sonata No. 1 (2011)**

*Premiere: 24 April 2012, Alice Tully Hall, New York City*

John Harbison (b. 1938, Orange, New Jersey) studied at Harvard, Princeton and in Berlin with Boris Blacher. Harbison has been professor of music at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology since 1969 and has also taught at CalArts, Boston University, Duke University and Aspen Music Festival. He received the 1987 Pulitzer Prize in Music for his cantata *The Flight into Egypt*, a MacArthur Foundation "Genius" Fellowship in 1989, Heinz Award for Arts and Humanities in 1998, and numerous other awards and fellowships. His residencies include Tanglewood, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, American Academy in Rome, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. In addition to many orchestral, chamber and vocal compositions, Harbison wrote *The Great Gatsby* for the Metropolitan Opera, which was premiered to great acclaim in 1999 and has since been performed in Chicago, Aspen, San Francisco, Tanglewood, and Dresden, and revived by the Met. John Harbison is also active as a conductor, jazz pianist, and chamber music violist.

Harbison wrote his *Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano* in 2011 on a commission from Music Accord. It was premiered at Alice Tully Hall presented by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Harbison said this sonata is called *No. 1* "because I wish to continue to write for this combination: I worked concurrently on another sonata (*No. 2*, unpublished as of 2020) of quite different character. The headings suggest the nature of the movements as they begin, but they often move in other directions. The boundaries between the movements are sometimes blurred. The natural pulse of musical thought, relying more on aural confidence than heady structural logic, guides the narrative."

**Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990):  
Canon for Aaron (1970)**

On 14 November 1937, Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990), a junior at Harvard, attended a modern dance program in New York City. In the next seat was "an odd-looking man in his 30s with a pair of glasses resting on his great hooked nose and a mouth filled with teeth flashing a wide grin." When they introduced themselves at intermission, Bernstein recalled, "I almost fell out of the balcony." Aaron Copland, already a seminal force in American music, and Leonard Bernstein, an ambitious student then unknown beyond his Cambridge campus, had met. When Copland invited Bernstein to a party at his apartment following the concert and they tore through Copland's challenging *Piano Variations*, a lifetime friendship was born. Copland's recommendations helped Bernstein get into the conducting programs at both Curtis (Copland attended the ceremony in Philadelphia when Bernstein graduated in 1941) and Tanglewood, the summer festival that played an essential role in both their lives.

The New York musical community celebrated Copland's 70th birthday, 14 November 1970, with a gala party at Essex House. (Not a note of *Happy Birthday to You* was heard, according to one report.) Bernstein wrote *Canon for Aaron* for violin and piano for the festivities and played it with Isaac Stern. There was a short pause, however, before they could begin the piece (based on the ancient technique of exact imitation of voices, like *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*) because the light in the room was too dim for Mr. Stern to read the music. Bernstein explained the delay: "You see this is crazy modern music."

**Dr. Richard E. Rodda**

## Cho-Liang Lin



Cho-Liang Lin is an internationally renowned performer, a creator and curator of music festivals and a teacher. Recent concert engagements include numerous solo appearances worldwide with prestigious orchestras. Born in Taiwan, Lin studied at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music before enrolling at The Juilliard School at the age of 15, where he was invited to join the faculty in 1991. In 2000 *Musical America* magazine named him 'Instrumentalist of the Year'. He joined Rice University as professor of violin in 2006. An advocate of contemporary music, Lin has enjoyed collaborations and premieres with composers such as Esa-Pekka Salonen, Joan Tower and John Williams. Lin was music director of La Jolla Music Society SummerFest for 18 years, and also serves as artistic director of Beare's Premiere Music Festival, and recently created the Taipei Music Academy and Festival. Lin's extensive discography,

for which he has received two GRAMMY Award nominations, includes critically acclaimed solo recordings for Sony Classical, Decca, Ondine, Naxos and BIS. Lin plays the 1715 'Titian' Stradivarius.

## Jon Kimura Parker



A veteran of the international concert stage, Jon Kimura Parker is also an Officer of The Order of Canada and holds honorary doctorates from the University of British Columbia and The Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto. Parker has collaborated with Cho-Liang Lin, Marin Alsop, Leonard Slatkin, Lynn Harrell, Frederica von Stade, and Bobby McFerrin, and as a founding member of *Off the Score*, performs with Stewart Copeland. Parker also founded the *Montrose Trio* with Martin Beaver and Clive Greensmith. Parker's YouTube channel features the *Concerto Chat* video series. He is the founding artistic advisor of the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival, artistic director of the Honens International Piano Competition, and creative partner for the Minnesota Orchestra's Summer at Orchestra Hall. Parker is

professor of piano at The Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. Parker studied at the Vancouver Academy of Music, the University of British Columbia, the Banff Centre, and The Juilliard School. He won the Gold Medal at the 1984 Leeds International Piano Competition.  
[jonkimuraparker.com](http://jonkimuraparker.com)

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- 1–4** Paul Schoenfeld (b. 1947):  
Violin Sonata (2009)\* **23:33**
- 5–7** Steven Stucky (1949–2016):  
Violin Sonata (2013) **18:58**
- 8–11** John Harbison (b. 1938):  
Violin Sonata No. 1 (2011)\* **14:43**
- 12** Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990):  
Canon for Aaron (1970)\* **2:35**

\*WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

**Cho-Liang Lin, Violin**  
**Jon Kimura Parker, Piano**

A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet.

Recorded: 20–23 May 2019 at Stude Concert Hall,  
The Shepherd School of Music, Rice University, Houston,  
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Cover (left to right): John Harbison (photo: Julian Bullitt),  
Paul Schoenfeld (photo: Brandon Monzon),  
Steven Stucky (photo supplied by composer)



AMERICAN CLASSICS

The three sonatas on this recording were written at the behest of violinist Cho-Liang Lin, who worked closely with each composer at their premiere performance. Paul Schoenfeld's *Violin Sonata* references literary influences and the composer's past as well as his Jewish heritage in the work's final *Freilach* or "joyous dance". Steven Stucky acknowledged Debussy as the source of inspiration in his work, while the alchemy of John Harbison's style creates music that is simultaneously abstract and narrative. Wryly introduced as "crazy modern music", Bernstein's brief *Canon for Aaron* was composed for Copland's 70th birthday celebrations.

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Playing  
Time:  
**60:00**