



# Paul JUON

## CHAMBER MUSIC FOR VIOLA

SILHOUETTES, 2ÈME SÉRIE, OP. 43

SONATA IN F MINOR, OP. 82A

SONATA IN D MAJOR, OP. 15

TRIO-MINIATUREN

ROMANZE, OP. 7B

Basil Vendryes, viola  
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William David, piano

# PAUL JUON AND THE VIOLA

by Derek Katz

Relatively little has been written about the composer, pianist and violinist Paul Juon, and what literature does exist has tended to focus on two themes. The first of these is nationality, generally emphasising Juon's connections either to Russia or to Switzerland. The second concerns Juon's musical language, portraying him as an anachronistic holdover from the nineteenth century, continuing to compose music in a late-Romantic style all the way to the beginning of the Second World War. These are both reasonable (and perhaps inevitable) angles, but they are not the only illuminating approaches to Juon's legacy.

He was born in Moscow, on 6 March 1872, and received his conservatoire training there, studying violin with Jan Hřímalý and composition with Anton Arensky and Sergei Taneyev (his fellow students included Sergei Rachmaninov and Alexander Skryabin). By Juon's own account, his music was marked by a 'gloomy Northern colouration' and by a lifelong love of Russian folk-music<sup>1</sup> – and yet he also had a Swiss grandfather, his second wife was Swiss, he owned land in Langenbruck, south of Basel, and he retired to Vevey, to the east of Lausanne on the shores of Lake Geneva. These biographical circumstances have been reinforced by the custom of organising recital and recording programmes by nationality, with Juon often included in collections of Russian works, and by the efforts of Swiss scholars to stimulate interest in Juon to underline his connections to Swiss culture.

Similarly, Juon did compose in idioms clearly connected to those of the later nineteenth century to the end of his life, and his style certainly does seem conservative in comparison to some of his close contemporaries, such as Skryabin

<sup>1</sup> Both statements come from a 1923 letter reprinted in Thomas Badrutt, *Paul Juon: Leben und Werk, Thematisches Verzeichnis*, Verein für Bündner Kulturforschung and Internationalen Juon-Gesellschaft, Chur, 1998, pp. E10–E11.

(also born in 1872), Arnold Schoenberg or Charles Ives (both born in 1874). Juon was notoriously dubbed ‘the Russian Brahms’ during his time at the Imperial Conservatoire (apparently by Rachmaninov), a label that has proved remarkably sticky, and was perceived during his lifetime as a counterweight to the more experimental trends of the 1920s. Juon himself seems to have largely accepted this view. In a 1930 interview, he described the current music scene as emerging from a troubled and confused period, and suggested that the ‘cold, intellectual’ direction of Schoenberg largely led into a dead end. Although music must always change, and good things had come out of the 1920s, he felt that music was once again ‘speaking more to the senses and to the soul’.<sup>2</sup> In a much more problematic way, Juon’s musical language was also held up as an exemplar of German nationalist culture around this time. Paul Schwers, editor of the *Allgemeine Musikzeitung*, opponent of musical modernism and soon-to-be vocal enthusiast for the National Socialists, wrote an editorial supporting the award of the Beethoven Prize to Juon in 1929, describing Juon as a ‘genuine master’, whose craft and accomplishments had more meaning than ‘futuristic soap bubbles’, and sarcastically suggesting that perhaps Universal Edition could use the profits from *Jonny spielt auf* and *Die Dreigroschenoper* to set up a Schoenberg Prize, which could be happily awarded to a younger composer like Alban Berg.<sup>3</sup> Juon’s *Rhapsodische Sinfonie*, Op. 95, was premiered in Düsseldorf in May 1938 as part of the Reichsmusiktag presented by the Reichsmusikkammer as a demonstration of officially sanctioned German music (the notorious ‘Entartete Musik’ (‘Degenerate Music’) exhibition in Düsseldorf was an adjunct to the Reichsmusiktag). Juon was already in exile from Berlin in Switzerland, but the *Rhapsodische Sinfonie* was hailed as ‘a resounding avowal of National Socialist cultural policy’.<sup>4</sup>

This focus on nationality and on a putatively conservative style, however, is both somewhat misleading and also directs attention away from other potentially useful approaches to Juon’s career. For one thing, for all of his Swiss heritage and Russian

<sup>2</sup> *Königsberger Allgemeine Zeitung*, 24 October 1930; reprinted in Badrutt, *ibid.*, p. E16.

<sup>3</sup> Reprinted in Badrutt, *ibid.*, p. E16. Erik Levi discusses Schwers in *Music in the Third Reich*, Macmillan, London/St Martin’s Press, New York, 1994, p. 229.

<sup>4</sup> *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten*, 23 May 1938; reprinted in Badrutt, *op. cit.*, p. E20.

training, Juon spent nearly all of his creative maturity in Berlin. As the Swiss scholar Laurent Klopfenstein suggests, Juon could just as well be dubbed ‘the German Tchaikovsky’ as ‘the Russian Brahms.’<sup>5</sup> The emphasis on Brahms is also problematic. Yes, individual early works may at times be reminiscent of Brahms. The Sextet for Piano and Strings, Op. 22, seems to have been partially modelled on the Brahms Piano Quintet, and the Viola Sonata, Op. 15, heard on this album, is also arguably Brahmsian.<sup>6</sup> But to subsume Juon’s lifelong orientation towards tonal harmonies and melodic invention under the rubric of ‘Brahms’ is both to overstate the resemblance of those early works to Brahms’ own and also to underestimate severely the sweep of Juon’s expressive devices. A comparison of the two viola sonatas recorded here will give some sense of that range. The Swiss musicologist Jacques Viret points out that few composers of instrumental music in the German tradition from the generation after Brahms completely evaded Brahms’ example, and, of his fellow conservatoire students, Juon was probably amongst the least Brahmsian.<sup>7</sup> For what it’s worth, 1910 photographs of Juon in his studio show him in front of a large portrait of Beethoven and a bust of Wagner.

Labelling Juon as a ‘conservative’ composer gives a misleading impression that European art-music at this time was moving in a single direction, and can be evaluated along a single axis. The more notionally ‘progressive’ works of the 1920s were not typical of everything that was happening on concert and opera stages, let alone in classrooms and bourgeois homes. Yes, Juon was from the same cohort as Schoenberg, but he was also born within a few years of Franz Lehár, Leo Fall, Fritz Kreisler and Donald Tovey – a heterogeneous assortment of musicians, all pursuing different modes of music-making, not a collection to be strung along a single line from left to right.

It may make more sense to situate Juon with respect to institutions than to assess him on the basis of musical style. Juon, for instance, seems to have had nothing to do with the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM), neither having any of

<sup>5</sup> Laurent Klopfenstein, ‘Paul Juon: Profil d’une œuvre’, in *ibid.*, p. E33.

<sup>6</sup> Nicole Kurmann writes on the Juon Sextet in ‘Zwischen Hommage und Identitätssuche: Paul Juons Sextett op. 22 im Vergleich mit dem Klavierquintett op. 34 von Johannes Brahms’, in *ibid.*, pp. E45–E52.

<sup>7</sup> Jacques Viret, ‘La musique de Paul Juon, ou les charmes d’un modernisme discret’, in *ibid.*, p. E29.

his works performed at their annual festivals nor serving on the juries for the festivals.<sup>8</sup> Given the wide range of compositional approaches represented at the festivals, and the frequency with which Juon's works were programmed in the 1920s, his absence from the annals of the ISCM seems to have been the result of a lack of professional affinity with the support structures for the Society, rather than a judgement on Juon as a modernist. Instead, above all, Juon was a creature of the academy, and, in particular, of the Berlin Hochschule für Musik. Juon first came to Berlin in 1894, to study composition at the Hochschule with Woldemar Bargiel (Clara Schumann's half-brother). After a year teaching violin and theory at the Baku Conservatoire, Juon returned to Berlin in 1897, starting to teach at the Hochschule in 1906, and becoming a professor in 1911. Juon remained in that position until retiring in poor health and moving to Switzerland in 1934.

If Juon is to be viewed as a 'conservative' figure, it is most appropriate to do so in the context of his long association with the Hochschule, where he provided a firm sense of continuity through a particularly tumultuous time in the history of the school. Juon was a student during the directorship of the founder of the Hochschule, Joseph Joachim. Even then, the Berlin Hochschule was conservative in the sense of being strongly allied with associates and admirers of Joachim's close friend Brahms, and oriented towards chamber music. Juon began to teach in Berlin during the very end of Joachim's time leading the Hochschule, and was appointed professor by Joachim's successor, Hermann Kretzschmar. Juon remained in his position through Kretzschmar's rather mild structural reforms, and the much more radical changes of the Social Democratic post-war period under the leadership of Franz Schreker, finally retiring soon after the National Socialists came to power.<sup>9</sup> Juon seems to have stood apart from the influx of students surrounding Schreker and Paul Hindemith at the school in the 1920s. The notable figures of the time

<sup>8</sup> Anton Haefeli, *Die Internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Musik (IGNM): Ihre Geschichte von 1922 bis zur Gegenwart*, Atlantis, Zurich, 1982.

<sup>9</sup> A history of the cultural politics of the Berlin Hochschule für Musik during this period can be found in Dietmar Schenk, *Die Hochschule für Musik zu Berlin: Preussens Konservatorium zwischen romantischem Klassizismus und Neuer Musik, 1869–1932/33*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, 2004.

were the students whom Schreker brought with him from Vienna (including Alois Hába, Jascha Horenstein, Ernst Křenek and Karol Rathaus), those who started with him in Berlin (including Jerzy Fitelberg, Berthold Goldschmidt and Paul Höffer) and those who came to work with Hindemith after 1927 (most notably Harald Genzmer).<sup>10</sup> Juon did not have a studio of comparable stature (his most prominent disciple was probably Hans Chemin-Petit), and Schreker's circle seemed to have viewed Juon as part of the old guard, albeit a particularly skilled member. Schreker's student Paul Höffer wrote in his diary in 1920 that 'aside from [Schreker's] students, only those of Juon had accomplished anything.'<sup>11</sup> Teaching in Berlin was not only a source of income for him but was also something that immersed him in a network of fellow professors, students and other academic institutions. Some sense of this engagement emerges from the dedications of Juon's works. His first completed string quartet (D major, Op. 5), composed in Baku before his Berlin teaching days, is dedicated to the Bohemian String Quartet, the leading professional touring ensemble of the time. His final string quartet (No. 3 in D minor, Op. 67), however, was published in 1921 with a dedication to the violinist Carl Wendling, who was both a quartet leader and a professor at the Stuttgart Conservatoire, where he would later be director. As discussed below, the latest work on this album, the Sonata, Op. 82a, is one of multiple pieces dedicated to a friend who was a distinguished academic but not a professional musician.

### **Sonata for Viola and Piano in D major, Op. 15 (published 1901)**

Juon's Viola Sonata comes from the period when the young composer was living in Berlin, but before he began his teaching career at the Hochschule für Musik. The Sonata is dedicated 'in friendship' to Robert Lienau Jr., a highly appropriate gesture in light both of Lienau's ongoing commitment to publishing Juon's works, and also of his successful effort to arrange for a stipend underwritten by well-to-do music lovers. This income allowed Juon to concentrate on composition during this early stage of his career, rather

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 148 and 152.

<sup>11</sup> Christopher Hailey, *Franz Schreker, 1878–1934: A Cultural Biography*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, p. 122.

than having to rely on teaching to support himself.<sup>12</sup> The exact date of composition of the Sonata is not known, but it was published in 1901, and was already performed in Vienna in March of that year.

If one wished to support the idea of Juon as a distinctively Brahmsian composer, the Viola Sonata could serve as an excellent example: it is an early work in a relatively conservative harmonic idiom, filled with Romantic expressive melodies, and also one that shares many of Brahms' favourite rhythmic and metrical devices. None of these elements, of course, is unique to Brahms, nor are they unusual for turn-of-the-century central Europe. Whether specifically derived from Brahms or not, subtle nuances of rhythm and metre do seem to be a central preoccupation of the Sonata.<sup>13</sup>

The Sonata opens, *Moderato* 1, with what sounds like a series of steady crotchets in the piano, setting a pulse, but giving no clue about the metre. When the viola enters in the second bar, these crotchets are revealed to have been syncopated, although it takes a while for the listener's ear to adjust and accept the viola beat as the primary one. The metre turns out to be  $\frac{6}{4}$ , although the division of the six beats into groups of two or three beats will be an ongoing issue. The theme itself is an arch starting from the bottom of the range of the viola, with a D major chord arpeggiated on the way up, and largely stepwise motion on the way down. Part of the sweep of the theme comes from Juon skipping over the expected D at the top of the arpeggio and reaching up for an F sharp. The subsequent bars introduce further rhythmic and metrical complexities, including the (yes, Brahmsian) combination of simultaneous quavers and quaver triplets, accented offbeats and displacements of the perceived downbeats. The opening material is then repeated, with the violist and pianist switching roles. Although this swap of melodic and accompaniment functions is what first catches the ear, Juon also alters the musical material to address issues raised by the initial statement. This procedure will turn out to be typical for the Sonata. In this case, the turn of

<sup>12</sup> Lienau's relationship with Juon is described in an unpublished memoir written by Lienau in 1942. An excerpt is reprinted in Badrutt, *op. cit.*, pp. E11–E12.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Badrutt, 'Rhythmus und Form in Juons Bratschesonate', in *ibid.*, pp. E37–E44 (online at <http://www.juon.org/T10b.Bratschesonate.pdf>).

the piano with the first theme is approached with such metrical clarity and stated so sonorously that the viola syncopations are impossible to hear as anything other than syncopations.

Again, typically for the Sonata, the first theme-group is almost completely composed of the theme and its repetition, with only a few bars of transition easing into the singing and more relaxed second theme from the piano. This theme has a number of unexpected characteristics. For one, it is in  $5_4$ , with further richness coming from a division of these beats. Most bars are divided 3+2, but the second bar of each four-bar unit is divided 2+3, with the third beat of the bar accented. The pianist's left hand also seems to be articulating rhythmic groupings that differ from the melody, but this effect may be more visual than one that is easily audible in performance. The second theme is also harmonically unusual. Although having modulated and prepared for the anticipated dominant, A major, the theme turns out to be in G sharp minor. Not only is this key quite distant from the tonic D major; it is also stated over a dominant pedal, and it is made more pungent through modal mixtures. The melody initially uses the natural minor mode (with E naturals and F sharps), but the accompanying voices use the raised leading tone of F double sharp. The middle of the second bar contains both an E natural (accented) against the pedal D sharps in the bass, and an F double sharp in the left hand immediately after an F sharp in the melody. As was the case with the first theme-group, this new idea is immediately repeated by the viola, joining the piano. This statement is softer than the preceding one, and, again less ambiguous, with the dominant pedal turned in a drone fifth with G sharps in the bass. The second theme-group forms a little rounded form of roughly AABAA'.

The tempo slows, and there is a pause and a fermata before the development, which begins with the syncopated crotchets from the very opening of the Sonata. The development continues with motifs from the first theme-group, first traded between the viola and the left hand of the piano part and then presented in close contrapuntal imitation. The preparation for the recapitulation is especially clever. Juon apparently wanted to recreate the rhythmic ambiguity of the syncopated quavers, accomplishing this goal by ending the development with syncopated figures and by preceding the



viola entrance with only three syncopated crotchets – still a surprise for the listener expecting the full bar of six crotchets from the very opening. The recapitulation is a very literal repeat of the exposition, with the second theme now in D minor, and a brief coda uses the opening gesture to prolong a D major triad for an additional ten bars.

The middle movement [2] is a ternary ABA, with outer sections marked *Adagio assai e molto cantabile* wrapped around a scherzando middle, thereby combining the characters of a slow movement and a scherzo in a single movement. Brahms used a similar strategy in his String Quintet in F major, Op. 88, and his Sonata for Violin and Piano in A major, Op. 100, although with two fast interior sections in both of those works (ABACA, or, if you will, a club sandwich as opposed to Juon's two slices of bread with filling). The first *Adagio* section opens with a viola melody tracing an upwards arch, supported by a descending arch in chromatic motion from the bass register of the piano. This melody is then repeated by the piano, with the quavers of the melody accompanied by triplets in the left hand. A contrasting strain pulling towards A minor is followed by a repetition of the entire complex, with the instrumental parts reversed. The *poco scherzando* middle section in E minor is a little faster, and has a lighter texture created by *staccato* semiquavers in the piano left hand and frequent grace notes. The effect of this section is akin to that of some of the short character pieces also heard on this album. The return of the *Adagio* material is abbreviated to a single statement of the material, but is otherwise very familiar until the final bars.

The third and final movement, an *Allegro moderato* [3], is very similar in structure to the first, set in a clearly delineated sonata-allegro form. Like the first movement, it has a development section that starts with modulating fragments of the first theme and moves to imitative writing, and a coda that prolongs D major. The opening gesture of the first theme is in octaves, perhaps slightly reminiscent of the finale of Brahms' Second Symphony. The theme is in D minor, but uses the natural minor scale, and each four-bar unit seems to end prematurely on the last beat of the penultimate bar. The modal, stepwise melody may recall the folk-music stylisations of composers like Mussorgsky, although these characteristics are no more the sole property of Russian nationalists than

combinations of quavers with triplets are restricted to Brahms. The recapitulation of the first theme is enlivened with some new textures and additional interplay between the two instruments, and Juon delays the arrival of D major by presenting the second theme in G major, working his way back to the main tonality of the Sonata as he approaches the coda.

### **Sonata for Clarinet (or Viola) and Piano in F minor, Op. 82a (published 1924)**

Juon's other sonata for viola is a version of his Sonata for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 82, published in 1924. Juon arranged the clarinet part for viola himself, and gave the viola version the opus number 82a. The use of the viola as a substitute for the clarinet immediately suggests the Brahms Op. 120 Sonatas, also composed for clarinet with an alternative part for viola (Brahms again!), but there are a number of other examples, both before Juon (Max Reger, Op. 107, 1908–9) and after (Alexander Grechaninov, Op. 161, 1935–40,<sup>14</sup> and Mieczysław Weinberg, Op. 28, 1945). Many of Juon's alterations are of the sort familiar from the Brahms sonatas. Some passages are lowered an octave for the viola, and some double stops have been added to the viola part. There are other, more significant, alterations that go beyond mere transcription and verge into recomposition. The viola part is less ornate than the clarinet model and has some additional accompaniment figures and new passagework.

Both versions of the Juon Sonata are dedicated to Juon's friend Ernst Orlich, to whom he also dedicated the Two Pieces for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 25 (1904, unpublished), and the *Fantasy on Danish Folksongs*, Op. 31 (for orchestra, published in 1906). Orlich was a physicist who taught electrical engineering at the Technical University of Berlin, and who would rise to become chancellor of that institution the year after the Sonata was composed. Given that two of the works dedicated to Orlich feature the clarinet (and that they constitute Juon's total output of music for clarinet and piano), it seems reasonable to assume that Orlich was an amateur clarinettist. It is further evidence of Juon operating in a musical network centred on academic institutions and including amateur performers as well as professionals.

<sup>14</sup> The Grechaninov Sonata, Op. 161, can be heard in a recording by Elena Artamonova and Nicholas Walker on Toccata Classics tocc 0234.

The Op. 82a Sonata is by far the latest work on this album, and displays a distinctively different style, typical of Juon's mature compositions. The harmonic language is no longer the one that Juon had been teaching in his conservatoire theory classes, but is now marked by parallel chords and frequently based on seventh chords instead of triads. The Sonata is still definitely tonal, centred on F minor and using appropriate key-signatures as it moves through different tonalities. It is certainly a conservative language in comparison to the more experimental trends of the 1920s, including the early twelve-tone works that Juon's contemporary and soon-to-be Berlin colleague Arnold Schoenberg was composing at this time, but there is no longer any hint of the 'Russian Brahms'. Juon's metrical practice is also now more fluid, moving through different bar-lengths instead of settling into steady grooves. Formally, the textbook sonata-allegro structures of the Op. 15 Sonata have given way to a single, fantasia-like movement that contains sections in different characters. One way of hearing the Op. 82a Sonata is as a symmetrical structure, with sections roughly analogous to the exposition and recapitulation of a sonata-allegro form encasing a central slow movement and (very) brief scherzo.

The *Moderato* opening of the Sonata [4] is typical of the harmonic and metrical ambiguity alluded to above. There is no question that the home sonority is an F minor triad, but F minor is not established through conventional functional harmonic relationships, but rather through linear motion in parallel intervals. Not only are there no dominant seventh chords on C: the leading tone of E natural is completely absent in this theme-group, and the second-scale degree is almost always lowered to G flat, frequently giving a strong push towards D flat major. The interplay between G flat and G natural will turn out to be a central concern of the sonata. Metrically, the opening section freely combines bars of three beats with bars of two beats, allowing for flexible phrase-lengths. Melodically, there does not seem to be a single central theme, but rather a collection of short, closely related motivic ideas that recur in different contexts. In particular, the opening gesture in the piano generates much of the material for the Sonata. After what might be heard as a first theme-group, a louder passage filled with running semiquavers functions as a transition to something that is easy to hear as a second theme. This new

material is preceded by a *ritard.* and is slower and in a new key. This new key is C major, finally providing the C major triads missing from the F minor opening. The key is announced by a piano fanfare spanning six octaves of G naturals, decisively countering the G flats of the opening. The viola picks up the G natural and then descends through a C major arpeggio, highlighting the first E natural of the sonata (discounting some passing F flats in the transitional semiquavers). This material is then repeated with some alterations and with the viola an octave higher, before the running semiquavers return, now tracing E flat major (another key that prominently features G naturals). Juon indicates a new tempo of *Vivace* here, but in practice both the character and the tempo may more readily evoke a second transitional section than a new idea. This section eventually dissolves into fragments from the very opening of the Sonata before coming to rest on a fermata.

Here begins the central *Adagio* [5], doing the emotional labour of the slow movement from a multi-movement work. It is in B flat major, and 'in' that key in a much more conventional sense than has been the case up until this point in the sonata. The parallel fifths and seventh chords of the opening have been replaced with triads and more standard voice-leading. The modal inflections have also disappeared (although Juon does touch on F sharp/G flat as chromatic passing tones, reminding the listener of the ongoing conflict between G flat and G natural). The *Adagio* becomes freer and more passionate, fluctuating in tempo and presenting a series of short, expressive gestures. The next section starts as if it will be a miniature scherzo to partner the compact *Adagio*. The new tempo is *Quasi Scherzo*, the new metre is a bouncy  $\frac{9}{8}$  and the dynamic is an assertive *fortissimo*. Motivically, Juon is still worrying the turning figure from the very opening, although it is now upside-down. It all adds up to a distinctively fresh character, and one that could well fulfil the structural role of a scherzo, but the section is very short, petering out after a stormy twelve bars.

After the tiny scherzo subsides, the opening material returns, much in the manner of a sonata-allegro form recapitulation [6]. The second theme-group is now in E flat major (still G naturals!), passing through D flat major (G flats!) on the way to F major for the second transition (*Vivace*, semiquavers). The Sonata concludes with a brief

improvisatory solo passage for the viola, and a *Tranquillo* coda that makes much of the descent from G flat to F.

### **Romanze for Viola and Piano, Op. 7b (1898)**

The first of Juon's three sonatas for violin and piano is amongst his very earliest works to be printed, and was one of the pieces that brought him to the attention of the publisher Robert Lienau Jr. According to Lienau's unpublished memoir,<sup>15</sup> he first heard about Juon at a Berlin string-quartet party in the winter of 1897. Lienau invited Juon, who had just moved to Berlin that year, to his home to play his compositions. Juon played his *Sechs Skizzen* (later published by Lienau as Op. 1) and the Violin Sonata for Lienau (with his father, still in charge of the press at that point, listening from a neighbouring room while nursing an illness). Lienau Jr. was enchanted by those pieces, and resolved to publish them and future works by Juon. The Violin Sonata, in A major, duly appeared in 1898 as Juon's Op. 7.

Juon was trained as a violinist, and so it is not surprising that the violin and viola should figure so prominently on his works list, including the three violin sonatas, three violin concertos and numerous shorter pieces for violin and piano or orchestra, in addition to the viola works on this recording and his chamber music for strings. He was also a fine pianist, and it is interesting that when he visited Lienau on that first occasion, it was as a pianist, with a friend playing the violin part of the Violin Sonata.

The *Romanze* [7] is an excerpt from the second movement of the Op. 7 Violin Sonata. This movement is a theme and variations, in which each variation is like an independent character-piece (the third variation, for instance, is a *Tempo di Menuetto*). The *Romanze* is the fifth variation in the set. As is typical for variation sets from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it is a slow variation in penultimate position, preceding a lighter finale and a coda. Juon reused the theme, the minuet variation and the *Romanze* as independent numbers in *Mosaic*, a three-volume collection of lyrical piano pieces published in 1922. There, the theme is titled 'Schlichte Weise' ('Simple Ways') and the *Romanze* is called a 'Preghiera' ('Prayer'). In addition to publishing the *Romanze* separately (both for violin and piano, and with alternative parts for viola or cello), Juon

<sup>15</sup> *Loc. cit.*, pp. E11–E12.

published the entire theme and variations separately as Op. 7a, and recorded the fourth variation (an impetuous rippling *Presto*) as a piano solo on a wax cylinder in 1911.<sup>16</sup> The *Romanze* was also one of the first Juon works to be commercially recorded, set down in 1928 by the Swedish violinist Charles Barkel (1898–1973) with the composer-pianist Natanael Broman (1887–1966) at the keyboard.<sup>17</sup>

The original theme is in a moderate tempo, and akin in character to one of Robert Schumann's pieces in *Volkston*. It is in F major, with a brief middle section in the minor mode. The *Romanze* is a slower, extended and more elaborate version of the theme, with the modes reversed. Here, the outer sections are in the minor, and the inner portion, now longer, is in the relative major. Each section comes with distinctive textures. The opening has the viola play the theme over syncopated crotchets, the middle section is canonic, and the return to the opening material first has the viola melody an octave higher over semiquavers in the piano. An extension of the theme has the viola in double stops. The complete *Romanze*, which begins with a brief introduction and is rounded off with a coda that leads back to the major, makes for a very satisfying independent work, much in the spirit of the salon pieces composed and arranged by Fritz Kreisler. The viola version is identical to the violin original, except that the violin part has been dropped by an octave throughout.

### ***Silhouettes for Two Violins (or Violin and Viola) and Piano, Op. 43 (published 1909)***

Juon composed two sets of *Silhouettes* for two violins (or violin and viola) and piano, Opp. 9 and 43, both published in 1909. According to his own (highly unreliable) works list, the Op. 9 set was composed in 1899. Whether or not that was the exact year, the Op. 9

<sup>16</sup> The wax cylinder has been issued as part of *The Dawn of Recording: The Julius Block Cylinders*, Marston Records 53011-2. The cylinder was not recorded for commercial release, but was one of many cylinders recorded by the businessman Julius Block in Russia between 1889 and 1899 and in Germany from 1910 to 1915. Like Juon, Block lived in Berlin and retired to Vevey, and the two were friends.

<sup>17</sup> Reissued in *Charles Barkel: Violingeni och maskrosbarn*, Caprice CAP21705. Barkel and Broman also recorded the first of Juon's *Zwei Kleine Stücke*, Op. 52. Other early recordings include versions of the 'Berceuse', Op. 28, No. 3, by Efrem Zimbalist (1912) and Jascha Heifetz (1920) and one of the first *Étude* from *Satyre und Nymphen*, Op. 18, by Olga Samaroff (1923), all for Victor, a 1924 recording of the 'Valse mignonne' from Op. 52 by Albert Sammons for British Columbia and a 1929 recording of the Op. 27 *Chamber Symphony* for the National Gramophonic Society.

set does seem to have been composed much earlier than Op. 43. Like the *Trio-Miniaturen* that follow here, the *Silhouettes* are short character pieces with flexible instrumentation that are well suited for domestic or amateur use. Although both the *Trio-Miniaturen* and the *Silhouettes* are played by violin, viola and piano on this recording, the other possible scorings imply different relationships between the players. Timbral contrast is built into all of the possible permutations for the *Trio-Miniaturen*, whether between string and wind instruments (viola and clarinet), high and low instruments (violin and viola or cello) or both (clarinet and cello). That is not the case for the two-violin version of the *Silhouettes*, where any difference between the two string parts would come down to subtle differences between individual players and violins. When the second violin plays material previously presented by the first violin (as frequently happens in the *Silhouettes*), it is more a social event than a musical phenomenon: the sharing of material exchange might be a meaningful experience for the players, but it might not be audible to the listener as anything other than a repetition. It's not clear what the title indicates. Perhaps the silhouette as a small portrait is an analogue for the character piece, with the solid colour of the figure corresponding to the relatively homogeneous characters of the short musical numbers, although Juon's *Silhouettes* are certainly not without contrasts. Unusually for Juon, the movement titles are in French (perhaps connected to the French origin of 'silhouette'), as is the dedication to his mother.

The opening 'Prélude' [8] is built from two ideas. The first has the strings playing long chains of triplet quavers in parallel octaves. Much of this section consists of whole-tone scales played over whole-tone harmonies in the piano. This distinctively early-twentieth-century sonority neatly sets off the second idea, a neo-Baroque contrapuntal section in C minor, also with triplet quavers in the fugal subject. The 'Prélude' ends with a dramatic cadence in the manner of early-twentieth-century arrangements of Baroque music, although whether it is serious or mock-serious is an open question. Although the 'Prélude' has some elements of pastiche, the subsequent D major 'Chant d'amour' [9] seems completely sincere, and lives in a world of late-Romantic harmony quite distant from that of the 'Prélude'. The violin plays a long, lyrical melody on the G string over gentle crotchet triplet arpeggios from the piano, with the middle of the phrase marked

by a deceptive cadence to B flat major. A more animated middle section allows for more dialogue between the string parts before the opening melody returns, now in the viola.

The third movement consists of three little Intermezzi. The first [10] is marked *alla Menuetto*. The delicate opening, with plucked strings and spare interjections from the piano, fits the character of a menuet, but as the string-players take up their bows, the style scoots from the eighteenth century to the nineteenth, and swings briefly into a waltz. The middle Intermezzo, in D minor, is more relaxed [11]. A folk-like melody is played first by the piano (Juon indicates 'simple') and then by the violin. A middle section, closely related melodically, is a little faster and a little perkier. The opening melody returns, now grander, with the strings in octaves and rolled chords in the piano, before a fast tag ends in the unexpected key of F minor. The final 'Intermezzo' [12] is again folksy, with the strings imitating an accordion and the piano playing a rustic tune in octaves. A quiet and more sprightly middle section gives way to a return of the accordion music, now with an added bass drone in the piano (has a bagpipe joined the party?).

If the Intermezzi take the listener from the ballroom to the village pub, the 'Mélancholie' [13] returns to the salon or parlour of the 'Chant d'amour'. Again, this movement is in three-part form, although this time the middle section feels like the primary character, not a contrast. The outer section, in B minor, is harmonically elusive, refusing to cadence on the tonic and also relatively contrapuntal, with motifs tossed back and forth from violin to viola to piano right hand. The expressive middle section, however, starts with a simple melody-plus-accompaniment texture, with the violin singing over harp-like arpeggios in the piano, all in a well-delineated G sharp minor. The opening of this melody had already been hinted at in the opening section, and so it sounds familiar here, even on first hearing. The tempo becomes flexible, and the viola enters with a reprise of the touching melody, now with commentary from the violin. The opening section returns, fragmenting into a long-delayed firm cadence in B major.

The last *Silhouette* is a 'Danse grotesque' [14]. There are a number of elements that could potentially be considered grotesque. The 'Danse' uses insistent open-fifth drones, especially in the piano, but including viola open strings at the beginning. There are also



persistent modal alterations. The opening drone sets the ‘Danse’ in D minor, but it is a D minor with a lowered seventh and a raised fourth. The raised (Lydian) fourth also appears when the drone fifth shifts to other pitches (like the second phrase, based on C). Juon quickly uses the Lydian fourth as part of a whole-tone collection, recalling the whole-tone scales of the opening ‘Prélude’. The rhythmic language is also unstable, with short passages in duple metre mixed into the prevailing triple metre (something also found in the ‘Valse’ from the *Trio-Miniaturen* and generally characteristic of the Op. 82a Sonata). In general, the combination of open-string drones, a quick waltz tempo and even the specific quaver figure at the end of each phrase suggest another unsettling dance, the Saint-Saëns *Danse macabre*. But whereas the drones in the outer section are nocturnal and spooky, the bass drone that supports all but the final bar of the middle section is more rustic: the scene has been moved from the supernatural realm back to the natural world of bagpipes (or perhaps of village cellists).

### ***Trio-Miniaturen* for violin, cello (or viola) and piano or clarinet, cello and piano (published 1920)**

The *Trio-Miniaturen* were published in 1920, but are fairly straightforward arrangements of much earlier works. The first three *Miniatures* are taken from *Satyrs and Nymphs*, Nine Miniatures for Piano, Op. 18, which was published in 1901 (as was the Op. 15 Viola Sonata), and the fourth is from the *Tanzrhythmen* for piano four hands, Op. 24, published in 1904. The *Satyrs and Nymphs* Miniatures all come with descriptive titles, but the trio arrangements retain only the initial character indications (‘Rêverie’, ‘Humoreske’, ‘Elegie’). Juon seems to have had a rather dim view of programmatic titles. In a 1939 letter to his former composition student Hans Chemin-Petit, he wrote:

I am also no friend of these kinds of programmatic details. On the other hand, I’ve also experienced that most listeners are very grateful for these hints. They have no imagination, and need to be ‘tickled’ a bit. I am often asked ‘What were you actually thinking? What does the music represent?’ It is laughable!!!<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Badrutt, ‘Was erzählt die Legende? Paul Juons Werke: Ein Überblick aus persönlicher Sicht’, in Badrutt, *op. cit.*, p. E56.

Juon must have been especially fond of these three *Miniatures*, as they were the only representatives from Op. 18 to appear in the *Mosaic* collection mentioned above (for what it may be worth, the descriptive titles are back for *Mosaic*, but they are now different: ‘The Bridge of Moonbeams,’ ‘The Happy Little Farmer’ and ‘In Autumn’). Juon provided parts for multiple instrumental combinations in the trio arrangements, with one part for either violin or clarinet and another for either cello or viola. The clarinet and violin parts are significantly different, with both tailored to be idiomatic for their respective instruments. The alternative instrumental parts allow for readings by four different instrumental combinations, including a standard piano trio, the clarinet, cello and piano trio used by both Beethoven and Brahms and the combination of clarinet, viola and piano familiar from works by Mozart, Schumann and Bruch. This recording uses the fourth permutation, of violin and viola with piano. The flexible scoring has helped to make the *Trio-Miniaturen* one of Juon’s most widely played works, as it is well suited both to professional ensembles and to amateur or student groups.

The *Trio-Miniaturen* are immediately attractive, and give a misleading impression of simplicity. For all of the attention given to Brahms in the Juon literature, if these pieces have a patron saint, it is probably Tchaikovsky. The first *Miniature* is a ‘Rêverie’ [15], which its earlier incarnations linked to dreaming nymphs and moonlight: it is the third of *Satyrs and Nymphs*, where it bore the title ‘Rêverie: Träumende Oreade’ (‘Mountain Nymphs Dreaming’). On the surface, it seems straightforward. The piano plays eight bars of a symmetrically balanced melody in the character of a nocturne, with a singing tune over pulsating syncopated crotchets. The melody is repeated, slightly embellished, by the viola. This passage leads to eight bars of a contrasting middle section, with the string parts in close imitation. Then the opening melody returns, now with a new countermelody from the viola. This description elides many subtle touches. In what key is the beginning? The melody starts on G sharp, and comes to rest there at the end of each four bars. Each time, though, it is harmonised differently. The first sonority is G sharp minor, the middle of the phrase lands on E major, and the phrase cadences on C sharp minor. The apparent repeat of the melody is not only slightly ornamented in the viola part but also has much more varied and active accompaniment figures in the piano.

The return of the melody after the middle section is almost completely transformed. In addition to the viola countermelody, the main tune is raised by an octave, and the piano finally reveals that E major is the home key. From this point on, the conclusion is surprisingly dramatic for such a short and apparently unassuming work. Instead of completing the melody, Juon raises the dynamic and intensity and extends the phrase to a sudden breakdown. A gentle coda insistently wavers between C natural and C sharp, taking care of the business raised by the B sharp used to tonicise C sharp minor in the opening phrase. Even in such a tiny vignette, Juon is taking the same care with harmonic nuances as he would in extended works.

The 'Humoreske' [16] is apparently bucolic: in *Satyrs and Nymphs*, it is No. 7, where it bears the subtitle 'Pan von Bacchus kommend' ('Pan coming from Bacchus'); and in *Mosaic* it portrays 'Das fidele Bäuerlein' ('The Happy Little Farmer'). It falls into three parts, with jaunty E minor outer sections on either side of a bustling E major middle. Like the 'Rêverie', it proceeds in eight-bar phrases (with extensions at section ends). Again, there are subtle touches. The E minor of the outer section proceeds without leading tones or dominant harmonies, with phrases ending with plagal cadences. The entire piece is based on a descending minor third, either as outlined by the main theme, in rapid succession, or filled in as a three-note scale fragment. Although the piece is very repetitive, Juon maintains variety by rescoring the material, and by constantly altering the textures. The use of bowing over the bridge on repeated notes in the middle section provides a particularly striking sonority.

The 'Elegie' [17] portrays 'Napaie in tiefer Betrübniß' ('Nymphs of the Dell in Deep Sadness') as No. 6 in the piano original, but merely reflects autumn in the *Mosaic* collection. Like the preceding miniatures, it is constructed from a small set of phrases, with variety maintained through reharmonisation and changes in scoring. It begins with four rolled chords from the piano, perhaps evoking the strumming of a guitar or bardic harp preparing to accompany a voice (this little introduction was added for the trio arrangement). The chords rock back and forth between the tonic of F minor and a subdominant seventh chord. The eight-bar melody that follows, intoned by muted violin, is supported by that same alternation of harmonies, all over an F pedal. The viola

and piano offer two bars of response, immediately answered by the violin. The rest of the miniature largely consists of repetitions of these two ideas, albeit presented in different ways. The return to the opening theme, for instance, is *forte*, has a countermelody in the viola and is now accompanied by chromatically ascending triplets in the piano (another novelty in the trio arrangement). Again, the apparent simplicity of the form and of the melodic material are joined by harmonic subtleties. Here, the opening melody uses the F natural scale, and there are no leading tones or dominant harmonies. The F pedal in the bass finally shifts when the viola enters with the contrasting idea, dropping to an F flat, enharmonically the same as the missing E natural leading tone, but descending to E flat to tonicise A flat major briefly. When the two-bar contrasting idea is repeated, the viola moves upwards through E natural, providing the delayed dominant for F minor.

The concluding piece [18] is not an arrangement of one of the *Nymphs and Satyrs*; instead, it was taken from the Op. 24 *Tanzrhythmen* for piano four hands, published in 1904. Juon published three sets of *Tanzrhythmen* for piano four hands between 1900 and 1908 (Opp. 14, 24 and 41), and, of the 27 pieces, four are in waltz tempos. Juon frequently used waltz topics in his instrumental works, and the designation ‘valse lente’ appears multiple times (the final number of the Op. 41 set is a ‘tragic waltz’). The final *Miniature* was marked ‘Quasi valse lente’ as No. 2 of the *Tanzrhythmen*, and additionally labelled ‘Danse fantastique’ in the trio arrangement. Compared to the preceding three *Miniatures*, the ‘Danse fantastique’ seems more redolent of the salon, with the strings mostly in parallel thirds, swooning tempo changes and a harmonic vocabulary more typical of social dance music. But it would be very difficult actually to dance to this number, as almost all of the phrases are constructed of four-bar units in which the first three bars are in the triple metre appropriate for a waltz, but the fourth bar has only two beats, wrong-footing any notional waltzers. A *Vivo* middle section has busy repeated figures throughout in the piano right hand, initially accompanied by *pizzicati* in the strings. It is followed by a singing phrase from the viola and culminates in the strings again in thirds, now in hemiolas before the slow section returns. A brief return of the middle section over a drone fifth in the viola and a final flourish ends the piece and the set.

*Derek Katz is an Associate Professor of Music History at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he received his PhD. He also holds a degree from Harvard, and has studied at The Free University of Berlin on a Fulbright Fellowship. His book Janáček Beyond the Borders was published by the University of Rochester Press in 2009. In addition to a focus on Czech music, his more recent work deals with music and middlebrow culture, émigré musicians and institutional support for chamber music in the United States in the mid-twentieth century. He also works extensively in public musicology and audience enhancement. He has written for The New York Times, the San Francisco Opera, the Teatro Real in Madrid and the Bavarian State Opera in Munich, and spoken at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. He also collaborates with the San Francisco Opera Guild, the Ives Collective and the Hausmann Quartet. He is an enthusiastic amateur violist and chamber-music player.*

**Basil Vendryes** is Principal Violist of the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, and is a former member of the San Francisco Symphony, the New York Philharmonic and Rochester Philharmonic Orchestras. He currently serves on the faculty of the Lamont School of Music of the University of Denver. As a member of the Aurora String Quartet (1986–95) he performed recitals in New York, London and Tokyo, as well as giving the west-coast premieres of works by Richard Danielpour, John Harbison, Benjamin Lees, George Perle and many others. From 2000 to 2018 he directed the Colorado Young Sinfonia (which he also founded), comprising some of the best young talent in the Denver area.

Basil Vendryes was born in Queens, New York City, in 1961 to West Indian parents, and began his musical training in the public schools of New York City at the age of eleven. He received scholarships to the Manhattan School of Music and the Eastman School of Music, where he studied with Sally O'Reilly, Francis Tursi and Heidi Castleman. He joined the San Francisco Symphony in 1982 at the age of 21 and the New York Philharmonic two years later, moving to the Colorado Symphony as Principal Viola in 1993. He has also served as guest principal violist for the Western Australia Symphony Orchestra and the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.



Photograph: Peter Lockley

He has appeared at many festivals, including those of Spoleto, Heidelberg, Sunflower, Midsummer Mozart, Interharmony, Taconic and the Grand Teton. Working with promising talent is one of his passions, and he has given classes in viola and chamber music in Europe and throughout the United States. He has served as juror for the Sphinx Competition for African American and Latino string-players and the Hong Kong International Music Festival. In April 2008 he performed the American premiere of Giya Kancheli's *Styx* with the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of Jeffrey Kahane, a performance repeated at the 2008 League of American Orchestras National Conference.

Basil Vendryes has recorded for the Albany, Ariel, Cadenza Music, Centaur, CRI and Naxos labels, in addition to his contributions as an orchestral violist for recordings on BIS, Columbia, Decca, Hyperion, Nonesuch, RCA and Telarc. In 2021 Toccata Next released his album *Three Centuries of Russian Viola Sonatas*, featuring music by Bunin, Glinka, Shebalin and Sokolov (TOCN 0014). He plays on a rare Italian viola made in 1887 by Carlo Cerruti.

The award-winning Russian-American violinist **Igor Pikayzen** is establishing himself as one of the most prodigious and in-demand soloists of his generation. Since his concerto debut at the age of eight with the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, he has appeared as a soloist with major orchestras in Europe, Asia and North and South America. In the last few seasons, he has given debuts, and returned to, Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall in New York, the Large and Small Tchaikovsky Halls in Moscow, the Congreso Nacional in Santiago and the Teatro del Lago in Frutillar in southern Chile, the Toronto Arts Centre, the Eslite Performance Hall in Taipei, the President Hall in Ankara, Le Flagey and the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, Le Bourget in Montreal, Centro Nacional de las Artes in Mexico City and Cadogan Hall in London. The many festivals at which he has performed include Verbier in Switzerland, Napa Valley and Mozaic in California and Night Serenades in Georgia. In 2023 Sony Classical will release his debut album, which features the Glazunov Violin Concerto.



The grandson of the legendary Soviet violinist Viktor Pikayzen, Igor was born in Moscow and received his Bachelor's Degree at the Juilliard School in New York, as well as a Master's Degree and Artist Diploma from the Yale School of Music. He won first prize at the 2015 Edition of the International Violin Competition Luis Sigall in Viña del Mar, Chile, as well as the Wroński International Violin Competition in Warsaw in 2009, in addition to being a silver medallist at the Szeryng and Kloster-Schöntal competitions. In 2019 he was appointed Assistant Professor of Violin at the Lamont School of Music at the University of Denver and he now divides his time between Denver, New York and Westport, Connecticut, where he launched an annual summer music festival, 'Edelio'.

During his 40 years at Iowa State University, **William David's** primary performance focus was as a founding member of the Ames Piano Quartet. The APQ concertised throughout the United States and internationally in Austria, France, Mexico, Taiwan and South Africa. The ensemble also spent a week performing and teaching in Havana, the first American chamber group to be invited to Cuba in over 40 years. They recorded fifteen well-received albums, with their account of the two Dvořák Piano Quartets for Dorian hailed as 'one of the chamber music recordings of the century' by *Fanfare* magazine. He was the pianist on Basil Vendryes' Toccata Next album *Three Centuries of Russian Viola Sonatas* in 2021, featuring music by Bunin, Glinka, Shebalin and Sokolov (TOCN 0014).

Since his relocation to Colorado, he has continued to be active in chamber music. He has collaborated with members of the Colorado Symphony and the Front Range Chamber Players, as well as faculties from Colorado State University, the University of Denver and the University of Wyoming.

He received the Doctor of Musical Arts degree *summa cum laude* in piano performance from the University of Michigan. His major teachers there were György Sándor and Eugene Bossart.





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## PAUL JUON Chamber Music for Viola

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|---|-----------------|
| <b>Sonata for Viola and Piano in D major, Op. 15</b> (publ. 1901)                 | <b>19:58</b>    |
| 1 I <i>Moderato</i>   | 7:05            |
| 2 II <i>Adagio assai e molto cantabile</i>  | 6:16            |
| 3 III <i>Allegro moderato</i>   | 6:37            |
| <b>Sonata for Viola and Piano in F minor, Op. 82a</b> (publ. 1924)                | <b>15:47</b>    |
| 4 <i>Moderato assai</i> –   | 5:37            |
| 5 <i>Adagio</i> –   | 3:03            |
| 6 <i>Tempo primo</i>  | 7:07            |
| 7 <b>Romanze for Viola and Piano, Op. 7b</b> (1898)                               | <b>3:17</b>     |
| <b>Silhouettes, 2ème série, Op. 43, for violin, viola and piano</b> (publ. 1909)* | <b>18:13</b>    |
| 8 No. 1 Prélude   | 2:41            |
| 9 No. 2 Chant d’amour   | 5:29            |
| 10 No. 3a Intermezzo 1  | 0:40            |
| 11 No. 3b Intermezzo 2  | 1:42            |
| 12 No. 3c Intermezzo 3  | 1:16            |
| 13 No. 4 Mélancholie  | 3:17            |
| 14 No. 5 Danse grotesque  | 3:08            |
| <b>Trio-Miniaturen for violin, viola and piano</b> (publ. 1920)                   | <b>10:34</b>    |
| 15 No. 1 Rêverie: <i>Molto adagio</i>   | 3:55            |
| 16 No. 2 Humoreske: <i>Allegro ma non troppo</i>                                  | 2:01            |
| 17 No. 3 Elegie: <i>Andante cantabile</i>   | 2:47            |
| 18 No. 4 Danse fantastique: <i>Quasi valse lente</i>                              | 1:51            |
| <b>Basil Vendryes, viola</b>  | <b>TT 67:50</b> |
| <b>Igor Pikayzen, violin</b> 8–18   |                 |
| <b>William David, piano</b>   |                 |

\*FIRST RECORDING OF THIS VERSION