

“Rorem, Ravel and Ragtime”

Irina Muresanu, violin
Roberto Plano, piano

Violinist Irina Muresanu presents an intriguing program highlighting the fascinating confluence of French and American music in the years after World War I, when France became “the” place to study abroad for young American composers, as well as an avid market for original American music. Envisioned as a “boundary breaker” project that brings together works from the classical, jazzy, ragtime and contemporary genres, **“Rorem, Ravel and Ragtime”** is an intellectually stimulating and enriching musical experience for a diverse audience with a variety of musical interests.

What do Maurice Ravel, Rorem and Ragtime have in common? This project will offer some noteworthy answers. **“Rorem, Ravel and Ragtime”** grew out of Ms. Muresanu’s interest in exploring these French-American musical connections via a program of works for violin and piano that “connects the dots” between composers Maurice Ravel, Ned Rorem, George Gershwin and other American composers such as Dan Welcher, Libby Larsen and Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson.

Ravel and Gershwin met in Paris and greatly admired each other’s music. The *“Three Preludes”* were written in 1926, just one year before Ravel’s *Sonata no. 2 for Violin and Piano*. The second movement of the sonata is titled *“Blues”*, a musical genre that has also inspired Libby Larsen’s *“Blue Piece”*, *“Rag Blue Rubato”* and Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson’s *“Blue/s Forms”*. Ned Rorem has lived a great part of his life in France and his piece *“Autumn Music”* sounds as American as French, with soaring lines and haunting melancholic moods.

In an unique twist, the program juxtaposes standard repertory pieces (such as the Ravel *Violin Sonata*) with works from an oft-neglected genre, which is nevertheless a jewel of American music: Ragtime. While popular, ragtime works are rarely included in a traditional classical music performance and there are very few written for the violin and piano ensemble. This circumstance presented to Irina Muresanu the perfect opportunity to commission two new ragtime pieces from American composer Libby Larsen and Romanian composer Dan Dediu. These works are performed alongside Dan Welcher’s *“A Rag for Rags”*, a funny ragtime dedicated to the memory of a dog named Rags, who was a constant presence at the Aspen Music Festival.

“Rorem, Ravel and Ragtimes” debuted in 2016 at the prestigious Newport Music Festival (Newport, RI) in the company of pianist Roberto Plano (concert pianist and Associate Professor at the University of Indiana at Bloomington). The program’s compelling theme and the appealing twist created by the insertion of Ragtime has resulted in multiple performances since at such distinguished series including Massachusetts’s Boston College, the Boston Atheneum, the Needham Concert Society and on New York’s DeBlasiis Series. The **Boston Globe** featured the program as one of its *“Critic’s Picks”* in October of 2016.

Program

“Rorem, Ravel and Ragtime”

**Irina Muresanu, violin
Roberto Plano, piano**

Libby Larsen (b. 1950)	Blue Piece (2010)
Ned Rorem (b. 1923)	Autumn Music (1996)
Libby Larsen (b. 1950)	Rag Blue Rubato (2019)***
Maurice Ravel • Allegretto • Blues • Perpetuum Mobile	Sonata for Violin and Piano (1927)

****INTERMISSION****

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson (1932-2004)	Blue/s Forms for solo violin (1979)
Dan Dediu (b. 1967)	Riesling-Ragtime (2019)***
George Gershwin/arr. J. Heifetz (1898 - 1937)	Three Preludes (1926)

Total program time: approximately 80 minutes

*** commissioned and written for Irina Muresanu