



NAXOS

Ferdinand
REBAY

(1880–1953)

**Complete
Sonatas
for Violin/Viola
and Guitar**

Laurence Kayaleh
Violin, Viola
Michael Kolk
Guitar

Ferdinand Rebay (1880–1953)
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Sonata for Violin and Guitar in E minor (1942) 23:46	
1 I. Allegro ma non troppo	6:24
2 II. Variationen über ein Kärntner Volkslied	4:06
Thema: Langsam und innig	
Variation 1: Ein wenig bewegter	
Variation 2: Leicht bewegt	
Variation 3: Wieder ruhiger und sehr ausdrucksvoll	
Variation 4: Sehr ruhiges Zeitmaß	
Coda: Zeitmaß des Themas	
3 III. Menuetto: Moderato – Trio: Etwas bewegteres	
Zeitmaß	6:13
4 IV. Rondo (Finale): Allegro, energisch rhythmisiert	6:49
Sonata for Viola and Guitar in D minor (date unknown) 23:56	
5 I. Sehr mäßig bewegt	7:21
6 II. Sehr ruhig und zart – Etwas bewegteres Zeitmaß	5:45
7 III. Scherzo: Lebhaft bewegt – Trio: Mäßiges Walzer	
Zeitmaß (sehr gesanglich vorzutragen)	5:03
8 IV. Rondo: Sehr launig vorzutragen	5:29

For the general public Ferdinand Rebay is at best a neglected composer and at worst completely unknown. He is, for example, not listed either in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* or even in Nicholas Slonimsky’s hugely comprehensive *Baker’s Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*. Nevertheless Rebay was a composer whose works, especially in the field of the guitar, deserve close attention.

Ferdinand Rebay was born on 11 June 1880 in Vienna. As a boy he received thorough choral training as a chorister at Heiligenkreuz Abbey, south of Vienna. Later he studied piano and composition at the Vienna Conservatoire where he was awarded a number of prizes including the Brahms Prize. After graduating in 1904 he became a choir master. In 1920, Rebay was appointed professor of piano at the Staatsakademie für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Vienna. In this period he composed two operas, an operetta, a symphony, oratorios, masses, a piano concerto, many choral works, chamber music and solo piano works.

Sonata for Violin and Guitar in C minor (1942) 20:18	
9 I. Mäßiges Marschtempo	5:40
10 II. Variationen über Und der Hans schleicht umher	7:03
Thema: Sehr ruhig beginnend	
Variation 1: Wieder sehr ruhig und leise beginnend	
Variation 2: Ruhig und zart	
Variation 3: Tempo primo	
Variation 4: Sehr ruhig (Adagio)	
Tempo primo (ganz ruhig beginnend)	
11 III. Scherzo: Presto (ma non troppo) – Trio: Etwas	
weniger schnell als der Hauptteil des Scherzos,	
aber immer gut bewegt	3:36
12 IV. Ein fröhliches perpetuum mobile in Webers	
Manier: Allegro giocoso	3:53

He also composed many Lieder with piano or guitar accompaniment and songs for children with piano and guitar accompaniment.

Rebay became interested in composing for the guitar following his friendship with Jacobus Ortnr (1879–1959), professor of guitar at the Musikhochschule, and through his niece, the concert guitarist Gerta Hammerschmied, the dedicatee of many of his guitar works. He composed about 600 pieces (296 of which are kept in the Abbey of Stift Heiligenkreuz collection) for solo guitar, guitar chamber music in various combinations with other instruments, lessons for beginners, solo songs, children’s songs and choral parts with guitar accompaniment.

During the Second World War his contract at the Academy was not renewed and he was only able to resume his post there in 1945. He retired in 1946 and died in poverty on 6 November 1953, in Vienna.

Dr Maria Gelew, a specialist in Rebay scholarship, has described his compositional style as ‘absolutely in the

Romantic neo-Classical tradition. Each work has a proper melody, accompanied by matching harmony. He used the classical sonata form, as well as Baroque forms such as the suite, the serenade and (especially) the variations. The influence of Brahms is apparent and also visible in Rebay’s editing of folk songs from various nations.’

Sonata in E minor opens with a poignant melody marked *sempre con molto espressione* (‘always with much expression’). This provides fine examples of delicate interaction between violin and guitar. The opening mood leads to an arpeggio episode for violin while the guitar plays rhythmic chords. This leads to double-stopped violin passages. The episodes are expressively extended to allow full exploration of the material.

The second movement brings in *Variations on a Carinthian Folk Song*. The theme is soulful, almost melancholy. The five variations on the theme are gently restrained and compact, leading to a quiet coda. The third movement offers a free flowing *Menuetto*, lyrical and imaginative. The *Trio* provides a momentary change of mood with pizzicato and staccato effects. *Rondo (Finale)*, energetic and rhythmic, is an extended piece presenting varying moods ranging from jaunty to reflective.

Sonata in D minor, written for the darker colours of the viola, opens with a tapestry of emotions some sombre and inward, before an extended recapitulation. The second movement centres round another soulful melody developing into a more agitated section before reverting to the more reflective theme.

Scherzo, marked *Lebhaft bewegt* (‘lively movement’), is light and playful, opening with dotted rhythms for the viola and solid chords for the guitar. The *Trio* is in the style of a characteristic Viennese waltz, sweetly sentimental and languid.

The *Rondo* is vivacious but with instructions that it should not be played too quickly. The movement has various elements of wit and humour emphasising the dotted rhythms and providing subtle interplay between the musical partners.

Sonata in C minor opens with a jaunty march which progresses to a lyrically reflective episode. A brief solo guitar passage introduces a section where the march idiom is subjected to a more emotional treatment before the insistent beat of the pulse is resumed. By the end the march concept has been thoroughly explored.

The second movement offers variations on the well-known German folk song *Und der Hans schleicht umher* (‘And Hans sneaks around’). The theme of the song shows Hans visiting Liesel, his love. She is at first unwilling to either look at him or kiss him. But in the end he tells her that his heart burns with love and she gives him a kiss and order is restored. The poem was written around 1849 by Franz von Woyna.

After the soulful rendering of the theme, the first variation is an extended piece with superb guitar arpeggios beneath the violin’s presentation of the melody. This proceeds directly to the second variation with the violin carrying the melody line. The third variation is a study in ornamentation and trills while in the fourth variation the guitar is strummed beneath a quiet violin solo. The final episode gives the guitar its own poignant finale while the violin accompanies. The *Scherzo* begins with rapid interplay between violin and guitar. Boisterous rhythms are balanced against quieter moments though touches of wit and skittishness are never far away. The last movement, written in the style of Weber is a perpetual motion finale of an extended kind with many opportunities for instrumental virtuosity.

Graham Wade



Laurence Kayaleh

Laurence Kayaleh has performed as guest soloist with many distinguished orchestras, including the Tonhalle Orchester Zürich, Russian National Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra (Washington, D.C.), Orchestre Lamoureux, Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, and the major orchestras of Cleveland, St. Louis, Caracas, Basel and Mexico City, under conductors such as Leonard Slatkin, Mikhail Pletnev and Hiroshi Wakasugi. She has performed at the Bolshoi and Tchaikovsky Concert Halls (Moscow), the Salle Pleyel and Salle Gaveau (Paris), Suntory Hall (Tokyo), Victoria Hall (Geneva), Verdi Hall (Milan), Teatro Teresa Carreño (Caracas), Place des Arts (Montreal), The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (Washington) and Mie Center for the Arts (Japan). A guest of major festivals such as Lucerne, Blossom and Cervantino, she has shared concerts with Victor Pikayzen, Ida Haendel and Igor Oistrakh. For Naxos, she has recorded the complete works for violin and piano by Medtner, Honegger and Catoire, and the complete violin sonatas by Raff. She plays a 1742 Pietro Guarneri of Venice which belonged to the eminent violinist and pedagogue Carl Flesch.

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Michael Kolk

Born in Vancouver, Michael Kolk has performed at music festivals and concert halls throughout Europe and North America. A prizewinner at numerous guitar competitions, he has released four solo albums to date, as well as three releases as part of the HK Guitar Duo, and an album of Mauro Giuliani duos with Jeffrey McFadden. His solo album, *Mosaic*, was critically acclaimed by *The WholeNote* magazine, and received frequent radio play in Canada. He has collaborated with many musicians in both classical and popular genres, and has performed with the Toronto Philharmonia Orchestra, the Canadian Opera Company and CineConcerts, among others. Kolk holds an Associate of The Royal Conservatory of Music (ARCT) performance diploma from The Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto, and a Master's degree in guitar performance from the University of Toronto. In addition to performing, he currently lives and teaches in Toronto.

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Photo © Joel Yum

Ferdinand Rebay was born in Vienna where he studied piano and composition, winning the Brahms Prize. He wrote operas, a symphony, concertos and many songs, but was increasingly drawn to writing for the guitar for which he wrote 600 pieces of various kinds. The three sonatas recorded here are little known and reflect Rebay's immersion in Romantic neo-Classicism. Themes are lyrical, utilising folk song, energetic March themes and variations, with a tapestry of emotions both sombre and exuberant.

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A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet

Laurence Kayaleh, Violin 1–4 9–12, Viola 5–8
Michael Kolk, Guitar

Recorded: 12–13 June 2019 at Pollack Concert Hall, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
Producer, engineer and editor: Drew Henderson • Special thanks to Canimex Inc. (Drummondville, Quebec, Canada) for having generously lent a viola by Giuseppe Dalaglio of Mantua dated 1820, and a viola bow by Roger & Max Millant, for this recording • Booklet notes: Graham Wade • Publisher: Ediciones Eudora
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Playing Time
68:13



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