

IRINA MURESANU

violinist

“*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 a 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 Ragtime**” 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.

“Rorem, Ravel and Ragtime”

Program

Irina Muresanu, violin
Roberto Plano, piano

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| Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) | Piece en forme de Habanera (1907) |
| Ned Rorem (b. 1923) | Autumn Music (1996) |
| Libby Larsen (b. 1950) | Blue Piece (2010) Rag Blue Rubato (2019) *** |
| Maurice Ravel • Allegretto • Blues • Perpetuum Mobile | Sonata for Violin and Piano (1927) |

****INTERMISSION****

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| Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson (1932-2004) | Blue/s Forms for solo violin (1979) |
| Dan Welcher (b. 1948) | Another Rag for Rags (1981) |
| 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

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Internationally renowned Romanian violinist **Irina Muresanu** continues to stretch the boundaries of classical music. A sought-after soloist and chamber musician who has appeared throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia and South Africa, Ms. Muresanu has also developed a reputation as a compelling and elegant interpreter in the contemporary music world. A regular guest artist in festivals and venues across the United States and in Europe, she is acclaimed for her elegant, passionate performances and compelling stage presence.

Muresanu's 2019-20 season features a mix of contemporary pieces and war horses. In addition to concerto appearances with orchestras, Ms. Muresanu can be heard in solo recital in "Four Strings Around the World," her acclaimed multi-media program of global resonance celebrating the diversity of cultures through the unifying voice of the solo violin, in duo-recitals and in chamber music, including performances with her ensemble, the Boston Trio.

An avid performer of new music, Ms. Muresanu has recorded for such respected labels as BMOP, Avie, Centaur, Albany, and AR RE-SE. Her latest release, "Four Strings Around the World" (Sono Luminus, 2018), a solo violin CD, features such renowned works as Niccolò Paganini's Caprice No. 24 and J.S. Bach's Chaconne in D minor, but also includes commissioned new works from composers worldwide.

Born in Romania, Muresanu is a laureate and winner of top prizes in several prestigious international violin competitions. She holds an Artist Diploma and a Doctor in Musical Arts degree from New England Conservatory and plays an 1849 Giuseppe Rocca violin and Etienne Pajeot bow.

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First Prize Winner of the 2001 Cleveland International Piano Competition, Finalist at the Twelfth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in 2005, Laureate of the 2003 Honens International Piano Competition (Calgary, Canada) and the 2006 Axa Dublin International Piano Competition, Italian pianist **Roberto Plano** has performed all over the world. Important venues in North America include Alice Tully Hall in New York City's Lincoln Center, where he performed the American premiere of Luis de Pablo's *Retratos y Transcripciones*; Severance Hall in Cleveland, National Arts Centre in Ottawa, and others. He regularly performs in Europe – notably at Sala Verdi in Milan, Salle Cortot in Paris, Wigmore Hall and St. John Smith Square in London, National Concert Hall in Dublin, and at the Herkulessaal and Gasteig in Munich.

website: <https://www.robtoplano.com>