In honor of the 50th anniversary year of the March on Washington and the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, the Clarice Smith Center’s 2013–2014 Creative Dialogues explore the issues of civil rights in a modern-day context. The right to pursue freedom of all kinds is a founding principle of our nation, but in today’s complex and changing society, freedom can be elusive. The 2013–2014 Creative Dialogues series will address a range of ideas on liberty and justice in the United States — the imbalance of hunger and nutrition, gay rights and marriage, war and pacifism — all with an emphasis on the artists’ experience and interpretation. Sparking discussion and new thinking around all civil liberties, the series will explore such questions as “Are we really free and equal?” and “How far have we come?”

**FAST FOOD, SLOW FOOD AND FOOD JUSTICE: GLOBAL POLICIES CREATING GLOBAL HUNGER**

Monday, April 21, 2014 . 7:30PM . Gildenhorn Recital Hall . FREE
Luka Arsenjuk, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, University of Maryland
Perla M. Guerrero, Department of American Studies, University of Maryland
Orlando R. Serrano Jr., Department of American Studies & Ethnicity, University of Southern California
Perla Williams-Forsom, Department of American Studies, University of Maryland
Join UMD professors Perla M. Guerrero, Luka Arsenjuk and Perla Williams-Forsom, along with USC’s Orlando R. Serrano Jr., as they discuss how food is at the heart of major policy flaws and societal disparities in the United States and around the world.

**HOMER’S Iliad: AN ANTI-WAR MANIFESTO?**

Thursday, May 1, 2014 . 7:30PM . Dance Theatre . FREE
Sudip Bose, Emergency Medicine Physician and Founder, The Battle Continues
Drew Cameron, Director, Combat Paper Project
Lillian Doherty, Department of Classics, University of Maryland
Denis O’Hare, actor
This discussion of Homer’s epic will feature perspectives from actor Denis O’Hare, Iraq veteran and artist Drew Cameron, UMD Classicist and Homerist Lillian Doherty, and emergency medicine physician and combat veteran Sudip Bose, who founded the organization The Battle Continues after his 15-month deployment to the front lines during the Iraq War.
JAMES EHNES (violin), known for his virtuosity and probing musicianship, has performed in more than 30 countries on five continents, appearing regularly in the world’s great concert halls and with many of the most celebrated orchestras and conductors. In the 2012–2013 season Ehnes performed in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, France, Australia and New Zealand. Season highlights included the Brahms Concerto with Valery Gergiev and the London Symphony Orchestra at New York’s Avery Fisher Hall, a tour to the far north of Canada with the National Arts Centre Orchestra, a solo violin recital at the Aix-en-Provence Easter Festival and return engagements with the Philharmonia, Rotterdam Philharmonic, and San Francisco, St. Louis, Toronto, Gotthenburg and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestras. An avid chamber musician, Ehnes toured with his string quartet, the Ehnes Quartet, and led the winter and summer festivals of the Seattle Chamber Music Society, where he is the artistic director. Ehnes has an extensive discography of more than 25 recordings featuring music ranging from J.S. Bach to John Adams. Recent projects include three CDs of the music of Béla Bartók as well as a recording of Tchaikovsky’s complete works for violin and his ballet The Sleeping Beauty. Upcoming releases include concertos by Britten, Shostakovich and Prokofiev. His recordings have been honored with many international awards and prizes, including a GRAMMY, a Gramophone and six Juno awards.

Ehnes was born in 1976 in Brandon, Manitoba, Canada. He began violin studies at the age of four, and at age nine became a protégé of the noted Canadian violinist Francis Chaplin. He studied with Sally Thomas at the Meadowmount School of Music and from 1993 to 1997 at The Juilliard School, winning the Peter Mennin Prize for Outstanding Achievement and Leadership in Music upon his graduation. Ehnes first gained national recognition in 1987 as winner of the Grand Prize in Strings at the Canadian Music Competition. The following year he won the First Prize in Strings at the Canadian Music Festival, the youngest musician ever to do so. At age 13, he made his major orchestral solo debut with the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal.

He has won numerous awards and prizes, including the first-ever Ivan Galamian Memorial Award, the Canada Council for the Arts’ Virginia Parker Prize and a 2005 Avery Fisher Career Grant. In October 2005, Ehnes was honored by Brandon University with a Doctor of Music degree (honoris causa) and in July 2007 he became the youngest person ever elected as a Fellow to the Royal Society of Canada. On July 1, 2010, the Governor General of Canada appointed Ehnes a Member of the Order of Canada. Ehnes plays the “Marsick” Stradivarius of 1715. He currently lives in Bradenton, Florida with his wife and daughter.

PROGRAM

JAMES EHNES, VIOLIN AND ORION WEISS, PIANO

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

JAMES EHNES (violin), known for his virtuosity and probing musicianship, has performed in more than 30 countries on five continents, appearing regularly in the world’s great concert halls and with many of the most celebrated orchestras and conductors. In the 2012–2013 season Ehnes performed in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, France, Australia and New Zealand. Season highlights included the Brahms Concerto with Valery Gergiev and the London Symphony Orchestra at New York’s Avery Fisher Hall, a tour to the far north of Canada with the National Arts Centre Orchestra, a solo violin recital at the Aix-en-Provence Easter Festival and return engagements with the Philharmonia, Rotterdam Philharmonic, and San Francisco, St. Louis, Toronto, Gotthenburg and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestras. An avid chamber musician, Ehnes toured with his string quartet, the Ehnes Quartet, and led the winter and summer festivals of the Seattle Chamber Music Society, where he is the artistic director.

Ehnes has an extensive discography of more than 25 recordings featuring music ranging from J.S. Bach to John Adams. Recent projects include three CDs of the music of Béla Bartók as well as a recording of Tchaikovsky’s complete works for violin and his ballet The Sleeping Beauty. Upcoming releases include concertos by Britten, Shostakovich and Prokofiev. His recordings have been honored with many international awards and prizes, including a GRAMMY, a Gramophone and six Juno awards.

Ehnes was born in 1976 in Brandon, Manitoba, Canada. He began violin studies at the age of four, and at age nine became a protégé of the noted Canadian violinist Francis Chaplin. He studied with Sally Thomas at the Meadowmount School of Music and from 1993 to 1997 at The Juilliard School, winning the Peter Mennin Prize for Outstanding Achievement and Leadership in Music upon his graduation. Ehnes first gained national recognition in 1987 as winner of the Grand Prize in Strings at the Canadian Music Competition. The following year he won the First Prize in Strings at the Canadian Music Festival, the youngest musician ever to do so. At age 13, he made his major orchestral solo debut with the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal.

He has won numerous awards and prizes, including the first-ever Ivan Galamian Memorial Award, the Canada Council for the Arts’ Virginia Parker Prize and a 2005 Avery Fisher Career Grant. In October 2005, Ehnes was honored by Brandon University with a Doctor of Music degree (honoris causa) and in July 2007 he became the youngest person ever elected as a Fellow to the Royal Society of Canada. On July 1, 2010, the Governor General of Canada appointed Ehnes a Member of the Order of Canada. Ehnes plays the “Marsick” Stradivarius of 1715. He currently lives in Bradenton, Florida with his wife and daughter.

PROGRAM

JAMES EHNES, VIOLIN AND ORION WEISS, PIANO

ABOUT THE ARTISTS
ORION WEISS (piano), one of the most sought-after soloists in his generation of young American musicians, has performed with the major American orchestras, including the Chicago Symphony, Boston Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic and New York Philharmonic. His deeply felt and exceptionally crafted performances go far beyond his technical mastery and have won him worldwide acclaim.

The 2013–2014 season will feature Weiss with orchestras around North America, including the Milwaukee and Vancouver Symphonies; in the summer of 2014 he will perform again with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. The 2012–2013 season saw Weiss in repeat engagements with the Baltimore Symphony and New World Symphony, as well as in performances with the Tucson Symphony, Richmond Symphony, Hong Kong Chamber Music Festival and at the Ravinia Festival. Weiss released a recital album of Dvořák, Prokofiev and Bartók in spring 2012, and also spearheaded a recording project of the complete Gershwin works for piano and orchestra with his longtime collaborators the Buffalo Philharmonic and JoAnn Falletta. During the 2011–2012 season, Weiss performed with numerous orchestras including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Mexico City Philharmonic, and also made his recital debut in Washington DC at the Kennedy Center. Named the Classical Recording Foundation’s Young Artist of the Year in September 2010, in the summer of 2011 Weiss made his debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood as a last-minute replacement for Leon Fleisher. In recent seasons, he has also performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, National Arts Centre Orchestra and Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and in duo summer concerts with the New York Philharmonic at both Lincoln Center and the Bravo! Vail Valley Festival. In 2005, he toured Israel with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Itzhak Perlman. Also known for his affinity and enthusiasm for chamber music, Weiss performs regularly with his wife, the pianist Anna Polonsky, violinist James Ehnes and cellist Zuill Bailey, as well as ensembles including the Pacifica Quartet. As a recitalist and chamber musician, Weiss has appeared across the U.S. at venues and festivals including Lincoln Center, the Ravinia Festival, Sheldon Concert Hall, the Seattle Chamber Music Festival, La Jolla Music Society SummerFest, Chamber Music Northwest, the Bard Music Festival, the Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, the Kennedy Center and Spivey Hall. He won the 2005 William Petschek Recital Award at Juilliard, and made his New York recital debut at Alice Tully Hall that April. Also in 2005 he made his European debut in a recital at the Musée du Louvre in Paris. He was a member of the Chamber Music Society Two program of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center from 2002–2004, which included his appearance in the opening concert of the Society’s 2002–2003 season at Alice Tully Hall performing Ravel’s Le Tombeau de Couperin with pianist Shai Wosner.

Weiss’ impressive list of awards includes the Gilmore Young Artist Award, an Avery Fisher Career Grant, the Gina Bachauer Scholarship at The Juilliard School and the Mieczyslaw Muzio Scholarship. A native of Lyndhurst, Ohio, Weiss attended the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he studied with Paul Schenly, Daniel Shapiro, Sergei Babayan, Kathryn Brown and Edith Reed. In February 1999, Weiss made his Cleveland Orchestra debut performing Liszt’s Piano Concerto No. 1. In March 1999, with less than 24 hours’ notice, Weiss stepped in to replace André Watts for a performance of Shostakovich’s Piano Concerto No. 2 with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. He was immediately invited to return to the BSO for a performance of the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto in October 1999. In 2004, he graduated from The Juilliard School, where he studied with Emanuel Ax.

AARON COPLAND (1900–1990)

Sonata for Violin and Piano (1942–1943)

The early 1940s — the time of Billy the Kid, Rodeo, Quiet City, A Lincoln Portrait and Appalachian Spring — stand at the heart of Aaron Copland’s “Americana” period. The immediacy of statement, clarity of texture and simplicity of harmony that mark these native masterpieces also touched one of his few chamber works that was spawned at that same time — the Sonata for Violin and Piano. The sonata was begun in Oakland, New Jersey in 1942, and completed the following year in Hollywood, where Copland was employed from February to September 1943 scoring the movie The North Star, written by Lillian Hellman and produced by Samuel Goldwyn for RKO Pictures. In the second volume of his autobiography, written with Vivian Perlis (St. Martin’s Press, 1989), Copland continued the story in the characteristically unaffected literary style that so keenly reflects the man and his music: “I had carried sketches for a violin and piano piece with me to California. During the frequent periods when I had to wait for the studio to move ahead on The North Star, I played through the piano parts of violin sonatas from various periods. My idea was for the piano to complement the violin rather than merely accompany it; thus the title: Sonata for Violin and Piano. I had just completed it when I heard that a friend had died while on active duty in the South Pacific. The Sonata is dedicated to Lt. Larry H. Dunham (1910–1943).”

“For whatever reason, at that time I had little desire to compose a dissonant or virtuosic work, or one that incorporated folk materials. Nevertheless, certain qualities of the American folk tune had become part of my natural style of composing, and they are echoed in the Sonata. There are no complexities — it’s an uncomplicated and direct statement of rather uncomplicated and direct musical ideas that I was developing. Throughout the piece, the piano writing is deliberately sparse and its linearity complements the melodic nature of the violin part. Above all, the work is lyrical and emphasizes the singing quality of the violin. There is little pretense of virtuosity.”

“The Sonata is in the usual three movements — moderate tempo, slow and fast — with the last two being played without pause. The first movement, based on an eight-note phrase with an interval of a fourth prominent, alternates in mood between a tender lyricism and a more rapidly paced section. Changes in timing occur throughout; in fact, the strong feeling of contrasting moods in the composition is achieved mainly through rhythmic changes. The second movement, in a simple ABA form with two-part counterpoint between the instruments, is calm and bare in outline. Harmonically, it is very plain — ‘white-note-y,’ you might say. The scherzo-like last movement is snappy and rather rhythmically intricate, combining light and bouncy material with sections that are more serious in tone. A short coda ends the Sonata with a reference to the theme of the opening movement.”

Though the Sonata for Violin and Piano has been overshadowed by the undiminished popularity of its immediate neighbors in Copland’s catalog, Neil Butterworth declared flatly in his recent study of the composer’s music that the work is “Copland’s most accessible and appealing instrumental piece.” In his Herald Tribune review of the premiere, given at Times Hall in New York on January 17, 1944 by the composer and violinist Ruth Posselt, Virgil Thomson judged the Sonata to be “one of its author’s most satisfying pieces…. It has at once a quality of calm elevation and of buoyancy that is characteristic of Copland, and irresistibly touching.”
EDVARD GRIEG (1843–1907)
Sonata No. 2 in G Major, op. 13 (1867)

Grieg completed his studies at the Leipzig Conservatory in 1863. Rather than heading directly home to Norway, however, he settled in Copenhagen to study privately with Niels Gade, at that time Denmark’s most prominent musician and generally regarded as the founder of the modern Scandinavian school of composition. During his three years in that lovely city, Grieg met Rikard Nordraak, another young composer from Norway who was filled with the glowing ambition of establishing a distinctive musical identity for his homeland. His enthusiasm kindled Grieg’s nationalistic interests, and together they established the Euterpe Society to help promote Scandinavian music. Grieg’s concern with folk music grew stronger during the following years, especially when he was left to carry on the Euterpe project alone after Nordraak’s premature death in 1866 at the age of 23. Also during this Danish sojourn, Grieg met Nina Hagerup, a fine singer and his cousin. More than familial affection passed between the two, however, and they soon found themselves in love. Nina’s mother disapproved of the match, and plans for a wedding were postponed. Back in Norway, Grieg’s creative work was concentrated on the large forms advocated by his Leipzig teachers and by Gade. By the beginning of 1867, he had produced the Piano Sonata, op. 7, a violin sonata, a symphony (long unpublished and made available only as recently as 1981), and the concert overture In Autumn. He also carried on his work to promote native music, and he gave an unprecedented concert exclusively of Norwegian compositions in 1866. Its excellent success brought him a notoriety that lifted him to the front rank of Scandinavian musicians: he was appointed conductor of the Philharmonic Society in Christiania (Oslo), had a full schedule of pupils and was popular as a piano recital artist. As a result of his success, he was able to retrieve his fiancée, Nina, from Copenhagen, and the couple was married in June 1867. The daughter born the following spring was yet another mark of Grieg’s increasingly happy life. It was at the confluence of these happy personal, professional and nationalistic streams in his life, “in the euphoria of spring was yet another mark of Grieg’s increasingly happy life. It was at the confluence of these happy personal, professional and nationalistic streams in his life, “in the euphoria of my honeymoon,” he wrote, that Grieg composed the Sonata No. 2 for Violin and Piano in G Major in the summer of 1867. The score was dedicated to John Svendsen, Grieg’s compatriot composer and a champion of his music, and first played by Grieg and violinist Guðbrand Böhn, concertmaster of the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, in Oslo on November 16, 1867.

The G Major Violin Sonata, so pervaded by the influence of Norwegian folk music that Grieg called it his “national” sonata, opens with a slow, poigniant introduction whose initial violin cadenza contains the thematic seeds from which much of the movement grows. The mood brightens for the sonata forms main theme, a buoyant dance-like melody. The second theme is in the nature of a delicate, wistful waltz. The exposition becomes more animated, and culminates in a heroic transformation of the second theme. The development section treats both the main and second subjects in a manner that would have pleased Grieg’s professors in Leipzig, and leads to the recapitulation of the earlier materials and a brilliant ending. The second movement is in a three-part form (A–B–A) that takes a sweetly nostalgic song as the subject for its outer sections and a lovely melody in a sunnier key, reminiscent of a springer dance played on the traditional Hardanger fiddle, for its central episode. The finale achieves a pleasing balance of themes, moods and folk influences in a movement that provides a tasteful showcase for both musicians.

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)
Scherzo in C Minor from the “F.A.E.” Sonata, WoO 2 (1853)

In April 1853, the 20-year-old Johannes Brahms set out from his native Hamburg for a concert tour of Germany with the Hungarian violinist Eduard Reményi. The following month in Hanover they met the violinist Joseph Joachim, whom Brahms had heard give an inspiring performance of the Beethoven Concerto five years earlier in Hamburg. Brahms was at first somewhat shy in the presence of the celebrated virtuoso, but the two men warmed to each other when the young composer began to play some of his recent music at the piano. Before the interview was done, Joachim had been overwhelmed by his visitor: “Brahms has an altogether exceptional talent for composition, a gift which is further enhanced by the unaffected modesty of his character. His playing, too, gives every presage of a great artistic career, full of fire and energy. ... In brief, he is the most considerable musician of his age that I have ever met.’’ The following summer, Brahms and Joachim spent eight weeks at Göttingen, discussing music, studying scores, playing chamber works together and setting the foundation for a creative friendship that would last for almost half a century. Joachim learned of Brahms’ desire to take a walking tour through the Rhine Valley, and he arranged a joint recital to raise enough money to finance the trip. Along with the proceeds of the gate, Joachim gave Brahms as a parting gift several letters of introduction, including one to Robert and Clara Schumann in Düsseldorf. On the last day of September 1853, Brahms met the Schumanns for the first time. “Here is one of those who comes as if sent straight from God,’’ Clara recorded in her diary. Brahms was introduced around town, and among those he befriended was the young composer and conductor Albert Dietrich, a favorite student of Schumann and a frequent visitor to his home. Joachim was scheduled for an appearance in Düsseldorf at the end of October to give the premiere of Schumann’s Fantasy for Violin and Orchestra (op. 131) as part of the Music Festival of the Lower Rhine, with the composer conducting. As a surprise for the violinist, Schumann, Dietrich and Brahms each agreed to contribute a sonata for violin and piano, and then challenge Joachim to guess the respective authors. Dietrich was assigned the opening movement, Schumann volunteered an intermezzo and finale, and Brahms offered to supply the scherzo. They dubbed the project the “F.A.E.” Sonata, after the phrase that Joachim had taken as his motto: Frei aber einsam (“Free but alone”). The music was finished quickly, assembled into a performing edition and inscribed with a reversed-initial dedication: “In Expectation of the Arrival of an honored and beloved Friend.” Joachim was delighted with the gift, played the entire sonata through immediately with Clara at the keyboard, and correctly announced each movement’s composer without a moment of hesitation. He kept the score for the rest of his life, and only in 1906, just a year before his death, did he finally allow Brahms’ scherzo to be published. The scherzo is Brahms’ earliest extant piece for violin and piano, though he had already composed at least one full sonata for that instrumental combination that either he or Schumann lost on its way to the publisher. The piece (“good fun — and harmless,” according to William Murdoch in his study of Brahms) follows the traditional three-part scherzo form, with a rather stormy C minor paragraph at the beginning and ending surrounded by a more lyrical central trio. Though written when Brahms was still very young, the music bears his characteristic qualities: rich harmonic vocabulary, insistant rhythmic vitality, a sure sense of motivic growth and full textures.
FRANZ PETER SCHUBERT (1797–1828)

Fantasy in C Major for Violin and Piano, D. 934 (1827)

The Fantasy in C Major (D. 934), the most important of the small handful of compositions that Schubert wrote for violin, was composed quickly in December 1827 for a concert given on January 20 by the 21-year-old Czech virtuoso Josef Slavík (whom Chopin described as “the second Paganini”), at which the young violinist also planned to introduce a concerto of his own making. For the program, Slavík enlisted the assistance of a friend of the composer, the pianist Carl Maria von Bocklet (to whom Schubert dedicated both the D Major Piano Sonata, D. 850 of 1825 and this Fantasy), and Schubert conceived the new piece as a display vehicle for these two excellent performers. The program won little praise. The reviewer for the journal Der Sammler wrote, “The Fantasy for Violin and Piano by Mr. Franz Schubert somewhat exceeded the duration the Viennese intend to devote to spiritual enjoyment. The hall emptied itself little by little, and the present writer admits that he is unable to say anything about the end of the piece.” Only the Vienna correspondent for the London Harmonicon found that the composition “possesses merit far above the common order.” Though there is a certain quotient of merely virtuosic note-spinning in the variations section of the Fantasy (Schubert himself was skilled both as a violinist and pianist), the difficulties encountered by the work’s first hearers probably stemmed more from the music’s formal originality and harmonic daring than from any deficiencies in its craft.

The Fantasy is arranged in seven continuous sections that bear only a tenuous relation to the traditional layout of the sonata form. The work opens with rustling piano figurations that underpin the lyrical flight of violin melody that prefaces a strongly rhythmic episode in quicker tempo, faintly tinged with Hungarian exoticism. There follows a set of elaborately decorative variations on Schubert’s song Sei mir gegrüsst (“I Greet You”), composed to a poem of Friedrich Rückert in 1821. The rustling figurations of the introduction return briefly to serve as the bridge to the “finale,” a brilliant showpiece for the participants. A shadow of Sei mir gegrüsst passes across the Fantasy before a brief, jubilant coda closes the work.

©2014 Dr. Richard E. Rodda