

**Trio in B major, op. 8 (revised version)**

This work makes for a fitting close to the program since it was written around the time of the Sonatensatz and revised around the time of the Violin Sonata in A major. If the violin sonata that Brahms composed one year earlier is mostly warmth with patches of darkness, this piece is in many ways the reverse: minor keys dominate—with the exception of the weightless, seemingly motionless third-movement Adagio, in B major—and much of the trio is restless and brooding, even if the brightness of B major often pierces through the cloud cover. In fact, the trio is remarkable for beginning in a major key and ending in a minor key. The agitated final movement starts in B minor, and, after a B-major episode that harkens back to the third movement, this is where it ends. Brahms jokingly wrote that in revising the trio he “didn’t provide it with a new wig, just combed and arranged its hair a little”—but this is pure understatement. The later version is more than a mere retouching; it is drastically shortened, and in some cases—the final movement above all—thoroughly recomposed. Ever the perfectionist, the nearly sixty-year-old Brahms could not help but reconceive his first foray into the piano trio genre, mingling the impetuosity of youth with the assurance of maturity.

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IN BEALL WITH BRAHMS SERIES

Monday, **March 2, 2015** | 7:30 p.m.  
Piano Quartet in C minor, op. 60  
Piano Quintet in F minor, op. 34

Monday, **May 18, 2015** | 7:30 p.m.  
Violin Sonata in G major, op. 78  
Violin Sonata in D minor, op. 108  
Piano Trio in C major, op. 87

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In Beall with  
**Brahms**  
concert one

Alexandre Dossin, piano  
Fritz Gearhart, violin  
Kathryn Lucktenberg, violin  
Steven Pologe, cello

Beall Concert Hall  
Monday, December 1, 2014 | 7:30 p.m.



**In Beall with Brahms, concert 1**

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Violin Sonata in A Major, op. 100

Allegro amabile

Andante tranquillo

Allegretto grazioso (quasi andante)

Sonatensatz (Scherzo)

Fritz Gearhart, violin

Alexandre Dossin, piano

INTERMISSION

Trio in B Major, op. 8 (revised version)

Allegro con brio

Allegro molto. Meno allegro.

Adagio

Allegro

Kathryn Lucktenberg, violin

Steven Pologe, cello

Alexandre Dossin, piano

**Violin Sonata in A major, op. 100**

“This area is so full of melodies that one has to be careful not to step on any.” So wrote Johannes Brahms of Thun, Switzerland, the lake-side town where he was summering in 1886. The same could be said of the violin sonata that Brahms wrote while he was there. Op. 100 brims with lyricism and warmth, and is as amiable and pleasant as the surroundings in which it was composed. The opening of the first movement sounds almost like a parlor song, with a graceful, lilt-ing melody played by the pianist alone—a sign that the piano is more than merely a supporting actor in this drama. But this parlor song is as artful and sophisticated as anything that flowed from Brahms’s pen. Nor is it without its darker hues—listen especially for the turbulence in the middle of the second theme, a soaring melody based on Brahms’s song “Wie Melodien zieht es mir.” In the second movement as well, lyricism gives way—in this case to a fleet-footed dance that periodically interrupts the beautiful main theme. The relaxed melody of the rondo final movement also falls under shadow from time to time, colored by minor keys and dissonant chords. But light prevails: in this world of sunshine and ease, the clouds produce no storms.

**Sonatensatz (Scherzo)**

Over thirty years before he wrote his A-major violin sonata, the twenty-year-old Brahms was trying his hand at composing for violin and piano. Lucky for him, he had a virtuoso friend to write for, the violinist Joseph Joachim, who was only two years older than Brahms but already famous by the time Brahms wrote the Sonatensatz in 1853. He also had the support and mentorship of Robert and Clara Schumann, whom he first met in the same year. The work on tonight’s program in fact sprang from an idea Schumann had to jointly compose a sonata as a welcoming gift for Joachim, who was en route to visit the Schumanns in Düsseldorf. For this “sonata by committee,” the composer and conductor Albert Dietrich wrote the first movement, Brahms wrote the second, and Schumann wrote the third and fourth. Joachim’s task was to guess who composed what (he aced the test). Even at twenty years of age, Brahms was in full command of his craft, and showing signs of his distinctive musical voice. Listen for the “Brahmsian” hallmarks, including syncopations and cross-rhythms, a driving energy, and a natural lyricism.