

SONATA FORUM NO. 4

# LOST AMERICAN VIOLIN SONATAS VOLUME ONE

ROSSETTER GLEASON COLE  
Violin Sonata in D major, Op. 8

HENRY HOLDEN HUSS  
Violin Sonata, Op. 19

HENRY SCHOENEFELD  
Violin Sonata in G minor,  
quasi Fantasia, Op. 53

Solomia Soroka, violin  
Arthur Greene, piano  
Phillip Silver, piano

# LOST AMERICAN VIOLIN SONATAS, VOLUME ONE

Solomia Soroka and Phillip Silver

The first recording I and my pianist-husband, Arthur Greene, made for Toccata Classics was of the beautiful long-lost violin music of the American composer Arthur Hartmann, which I had discovered in the basement of the Philadelphia Free Library.<sup>1</sup> Of course, I went back to look for more music, and this time discovered a monumental sonata by the obscure Rossetter Cole, whom I had never heard of. While we were excitedly learning this epic piece, we discovered to our amazement that Rossetter Cole was from our hometown of Ann Arbor, Michigan, 140 years earlier. He had graduated from Ann Arbor High School and the University of Michigan and was married here, and as we researched him further, we found his grave in the local cemetery. That's how the quest for more 'lost' American music for violin and piano began.

The sonatas on this new recording were written at a time when American audiences were fascinated primarily with German composers. Even though many American composers were trained in Germany, their works were not widely performed in American concert-halls. That, I believe, is at least part of the reason that such treasures, though once published, faded into obscurity. And it's a shame, because these sonatas are so masterfully crafted – written in the finest Romantic traditions, and yet with a distinctly American voice. There's more to come, too: a second volume is already in preparation, and our explorations will continue. Our hope is that these releases will spark a renaissance for these gifted American composers and their music.

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<sup>1</sup> Released on Toccata Classics TOCC 0085.

## ROSSETTER G. COLE

1866–1952

### **Sonata for Violin and Piano in D major, Op. 8 (publ. 1917)**

Rossetter Gleason Cole was a distinguished American composer and educator whose contributions helped shape the development of American classical music at the turn of the twentieth century. Born on 5 February 1866, in Clyde, Michigan, he was the youngest of six children. After the early death of his father, Cole's mother moved the family to Ann Arbor, determined – despite limited means – to provide her children with the best possible education.



Initially home-schooled by his mother, Cole entered formal education at the age of nine and went on to graduate from the Latin course at Ann Arbor High School in 1884.

Cole's promise as a composer was evident from childhood. He began writing music as early as six, and a surviving fragment from an instrumental piece from that period, *A Storm at Sea*, offers a glimpse of his youthful creativity; but it wasn't until high school that his musical instincts were formally cultivated. He earned a Bachelor of Philosophy from the University of Michigan in 1888, but while pursuing his degree of philosophy, he also took music courses, among them music theory and composition, from Calvin B. Cady<sup>2</sup> and studied organ with Francis L. York.<sup>3</sup> For his senior thesis he composed a cantata, *The Passing of Summer*, for full orchestra, chorus and soloists which was performed on the evening before 'commencement' (the ceremony during which degrees or diplomas are conferred on graduating students). It was the first time in the history of the University that a student work had been honoured in this way.

<sup>2</sup> Calvin Brainerd Cady (1851–1928) was the founder of, and professor at, the music department at the University of Michigan and a pioneer in the teaching of music as a degree subject in the United States.

<sup>3</sup> Another Michigan native, Francis Lodowick York (1861–1955) studied organ and composition with Alexandre Guilmant in Paris before teaching piano, organ and composition at the University of Michigan; he was later head of the piano department at the Michigan State Normal Conservatory and director of the Detroit Conservatory of Music.

After completing his undergraduate degree, he taught high-school English, Latin and German before earning a scholarship to study music in Berlin in 1890. There Cole studied with some of the most prominent musicians of the time, including Heinrich van Eyken, Gustav Kogel and Wilhelm Middelschulte, who later became an important figure in the musical life of Chicago (and the dedicatee of Busoni's *Fantasia contrappuntistica*). On van Eyken's recommendation, Cole applied to the prestigious Meisterschule für Komposition – part of the Königliche Akademie der Künste (Royal Academy of Arts) – and was accepted as one of only 24 students, becoming the sixth American ever admitted. He spent two years in intensive study there, under the mentorship of Max Bruch, before financial constraints forced his return to the USA.

Cole's return marked the beginning of an influential teaching career. He served as musical director at Ripon College in Wisconsin and, beginning in 1894, led the music department at Iowa College (now Grinnell College). Under his leadership, the department expanded to include six faculty members and over 130 students. He also founded and conducted both a college glee club and an orchestra, which gained widespread acclaim on their regional tours. In 1896, in Ann Arbor, he married Fannie Louise Gwinner, a musician herself.

A respected figure in the national music-education community, Cole was an active member of the New York Manuscript Society and later the Chicago Manuscript Society – organisations dedicated to the advancement of American composers. He presented scholarly papers at the Music Teachers' National Association on topics such as music education and harmony pedagogy, and in 1897 he was elected the MTNA vice-president for the state of Iowa. His articles appeared in various publications, and his compositions were published by leading music houses. He died on 18 May 1952 in Lake Bluff, Illinois, and was buried in Forest Hill Cemetery in Ann Arbor.

Among his best-known compositions are the opera *The Maypole Lovers* (1931), *Hiawatha's Wooing* for narrator and piano (1904), a *Ballade* for cello and orchestra (1909) and the *Pioneer Overture* (1919).

Cole's Sonata for Violin and Piano in D major, Op. 8, was published by the Arthur P. Schmidt Co. in 1917, with a dedication to Max Bruch. It is a monumental four-movement

piece of symphonic form and dimensions. The Sonata is quintessentially Romantic in spirit but with a distinctly American flavour. The first movement, *Allegro moderato* [1], is written in classical sonata form, and the second, *Presto* [2], is a brilliant scherzo with a lush *Andante* middle section. The rich slow movement that follows, *Adagio* [3], is connected *attacca* to the emotionally virtuosic finale, *Allegro con moto* [4], through an operatic recitative. The haunting melody of the slow movement along with the recitative returns at the end of the Sonata right before the brilliant coda. SS

## HENRY HOLDEN HUSS

1862–1953

### Violin Sonata, Op. 19 (c. 1894)

Henry Holden Huss occupies a modest but fascinating niche in the history of American Romanticism. Born in Newark, New Jersey, on 21 June 1862, he was among the generation of American composers who sought to raise the stature of American concert music in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Like many of his peers – including Edward MacDowell and Arthur Foote – Huss studied in Germany, enrolling at the Royal Conservatoire in Munich, where he was a composition pupil of Joseph Rheinberger, whose conservative pedagogical approach emphasised thorough thematic development, formal clarity and contrapuntal rigour. That training placed him in the sphere of the so-called ‘Second New England School’, a loosely affiliated, mainly Boston-based group of academically trained American composers who absorbed European styles, particularly the German Romantic idiom, and sought to adapt them to American musical life.<sup>4</sup>

After returning to the United States, Huss settled in New York, where he made his living as a pianist, composer, teacher and critic. Although his music was occasionally performed by major ensembles during his lifetime – his Piano Concerto in B major,



<sup>4</sup> H. Wiley Hitchcock, *Music in the United States: A Historical Introduction*, 4th edn., Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River (NJ), 2000, pp. 197–99.

Op. 10, was even championed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra<sup>5</sup> – his work fell into obscurity in the decades after his death, on 17 September 1953. Today, his name is rarely mentioned outside specialist circles, but his surviving works reveal a composer of genuine craftsmanship and expressive ambition.

The Violin Sonata, Op. 19, is one of Huss' most substantial and finely wrought compositions.<sup>6</sup> It was premiered by the violinist Theodore Spiering, who had served as concert-master of the New York Philharmonic and was a prominent advocate of new music.<sup>7</sup> The Sonata was composed during a particularly fruitful period in Huss' career, one that also produced his ambitious String Quartet in D minor, Op. 31, and several large-scale piano works. Cast in three movements, it is a compelling example of late-Romantic chamber music in the Brahmsian tradition. The first movement, *Allegro con brio* [5], is marked by noble lyricism and a tightly organised sonata form. Its main theme is broad and declamatory, whereas the second subject offers more delicate, introspective material. Huss' command of motivic development and harmonic colour is evident throughout. The second movement, marked *Andante ma molto sostenuto* [6], serves as the emotional centre of the work. It unfolds as an extended lyrical meditation, its *cantabile* violin lines supported by rich and often chromatic piano-writing. The mood is contemplative and occasionally tinged with melancholy, reminiscent of the slow movements of Fauré or late Schumann, and yet with a distinctly American restraint in its expression. The finale, marked *Allegro molto* [7], returns to the stormy minor-key tonality of the first movement. This movement is rhythmically vital and thematically integrated with earlier material. It offers a welcome contrast to the introspective second movement without sacrificing the gravitas of the work as a whole. Huss' contrapuntal skill is on full display here, particularly in the episodic passages where violin and piano engage in intricate exchanges. The work concludes in a spirit of energetic affirmation.

<sup>5</sup> In 1997 a recording of the work was released by Hyperion, on Volume 16 of the series of 'Romantic Piano Concertos', in a performance by Ian Hobson, with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra conducted by Martyn Brabbins (CDA66949).

<sup>6</sup> The score bears no indication of a home key. The work does fluctuate between G major and minor, but it would seem that, since other Huss compositions do indicate a key, its absence here was a deliberate decision.

<sup>7</sup> E. Douglas Bomberger, *MacDowell and His Circle: A Biographical Dictionary of Contemporary American Composers*, Scarecrow Press, Metuchen (NJ), 2000, p. 165.

Although Henry Holden Huss has never achieved widespread recognition, recent revivals of his orchestral and chamber music reveal a composer of high craftsmanship, deep expressive instincts and an individual voice shaped by his American roots and German training. His work was largely bypassed by the modernist movements that gained ground in the early twentieth century, but he nevertheless represents an important chapter in the development of American concert-music. As Carol J. Oja notes, composers like Huss were ‘firmly rooted in a late-Romantic idiom and clung to the stylistic security it offered even as the musical world around them was transforming’.<sup>8</sup> The Violin Sonata is a testament to that world – beautifully crafted, emotionally sincere and deserving of renewed attention. The rediscovery of Huss was much facilitated three decades ago by Gary A. Greene’s exhaustive study of his life and music, with a complete catalogue of compositions: *Henry Holden Huss: An American Composer’s Life*.<sup>9</sup> PS

## HENRY SCHOENEFELD

1857–1936

### **Violin Sonata in G minor, *Sonata quasi Fantasia*, Op. 53 (publ. 1903)**

Like Cole and Huss, Henry Schoenefeld was an American composer, conductor, pianist and educator rooted in the late-Romantic tradition, who made important contributions to the development of American concert-music, especially in the Midwest. Schoenefeld belonged to an American nationalist movement aimed at creating a distinctly American musical tradition: as with Arthur Farwell and Edward MacDowell, he used African-American and Native-American folk melodies in his compositions.



Born on 4 October 1857, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to German immigrant parents, he began his musical journey under his father’s tutelage before launching his studies in

<sup>8</sup> *Making Music Modern: New York in the 1920s*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2000, p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> Scarecrow Press, Metuchen (NJ) and London, 1995.

Europe. At age eighteen, he attended the Leipzig Conservatoire, studying composition and instrumentation with Carl Reinecke and Eduard Lassen, piano with Robert Papperitz and violin with Friedrich Hermann. Schoenefeld went on to complete his European studies in Weimar, and then returned to the USA, settling in Chicago in 1879. There, he taught at the Hershey School of Music and led ensembles including the Germania Männerchor (a male-voice choral society focused on German repertoire), and later, from 1891 to 1902, a mixed choir. In 1904, he relocated to Los Angeles, where he balanced roles as a choral director and, most prominently, conductor of the Woman's Symphony Orchestra until approximately 1930; the ensemble was lauded for its scholarly and refined performances under his leadership. He served on the faculty at UCLA, maintaining a private studio in Los Angeles, and mentored several students who would become notable musicians, most famously the composer Roy Harris.

As a composer, Schoenefeld blended a Romantic idiom with American themes. His output includes two operas (*Atala, or the Love of Two Savages* and *Wachicanta*), a *Rural Symphony* (1892), *Indian Suite*, Op. 15, this Violin Sonata, Op. 53, and a violin concerto, Op. 59, a cello concerto, Op. 80, numerous short pieces for piano, songs and choral compositions for male chorus. He died on 4 August 1936, in Los Angeles.

Schoenefeld's Violin Sonata in G minor, Op. 53, which on the score bears the title *Sonate quasi Fantasia*, is a vibrant and virtuosic work for violin and piano. First published in 1903 by N. Simrock in Berlin, it is dedicated to the French violinist Henri Marteau. The first of its three movement, *Allegro con spirito e energico* [8], is fiery and full of dramatic tension. It is cast in classical sonata form, but true to its title it includes two short quasi-improvisational cadenzas. The lyrical second movement, a 'Romanze' which opens *Andante cantabile e espressivo* [9], is in ternary form. It begins with a heartfelt, singing violin line, then shifts into a gently animated middle section (*Andante*), and returns to the original melody, now marked *Allegro moderato e tranquillo*. This movement showcases melodic expressiveness and rich interplay between the piano and violin. The third and final movement, a rondo marked *Vivace* [10], is playful but technically demanding and brings the Sonata to a joyous and virtuosic close.

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The Ukrainian-American violinist **Solomia Soroka**, made her solo debut at age ten playing the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto with the Lviv Philharmonic Orchestra. Her playing combines the powerful background of the Ukrainian system with a passionate exploration of unfamiliar music, especially Ukrainian and American. She is a recording artist for Naxos and Toccata Classics, and now also Toccata Next. She has made nine first recordings of music by the American composers William Bolcom and Arthur Hartmann and the Ukrainian composers Mykola Lysenko, Nikolai Roslavets, Myroslav Skoryk and Yevhen Stankovych, as well as two composers who were banned by the Nazis, the German Bernhard Sekles and Italian Leone Sinigaglia.

She has appeared as soloist and as chamber musician in concerts and festivals in Australia, New Zealand, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Ukraine, USA, Canada, China, South Korea and Taiwan, and has given master-classes in many of these countries. Since her US debut in 1997, she has performed throughout the United States. Her recitals in Washington, DC, were part of the Smithsonian Institute performing arts series and she received the following review in *The Washington Post*: ‘Soroka is a superbly equipped violinist, at ease with the technical challenges of Sarasate or of Jeno Hubay’s Czardas No. 2, but even more impressive in the gentler moments [...]. Her tone is warm and mellow on the low strings, brilliant on the high strings, perfectly controlled and expressively used’.

Solomia Soroka has toured and recorded extensively with her husband, the pianist Arthur Greene. Their Naxos recording of four violin sonatas by William Bolcom was selected by Classics Today as Recording of the Month, with the highest ranking for both artistry and sound quality, and received reviews in various distinguished journals. Their recordings can be found on YouTube, Spotify and Apple Music.

Solomia Soroka is currently a professor of violin at Goshen College, Indiana. She is the artistic director of the Sherer Violin/Piano Competition for young musicians and the artistic director of the multicultural series ‘Musical Evenings at the Ukrainian Museum’ in Detroit. She



is also a member of the National Academy of Arts of Ukraine, and serves on a jury of the International Music Olympiad in Kyiv. She has been on the faculty of chamber music at the Kyiv Conservatoire, and has taught at the Music Fest Perugia in Italy, the Castleman Quartet Program, Pilsen Summer Academy, Schlern Music Festival and Vivace International Festival.

She studied with Hersh Heifetz, Bohodar Kotorovych, Liudmyla Zvirko and Charles Castleman.

*www.solomiasoroka.com*

**Arthur Greene** was born in New York City and received degrees from Yale, Juilliard and Stony Brook. He studied with Martin Canin. He won the first prizes in the Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition and the William Kapell Competition and was a top prize-winner in the Busoni Competition. He has performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the San Francisco, Utah and National Symphonies in the United States and, further afield, the Ukraine National Symphony, Czech National Symphony, Tokyo Symphony Orchestras and many others. He has played recitals in Carnegie Hall in New York, the Kennedy Center in Washington, the Rachmaninov Hall in Moscow, Tokyo Bunka Kaikan, São Paulo Opera House, Hong Kong City Hall, concert-halls in Shanghai, Beijing and Seoul, and all the major cities in Japan. He was an Artistic Ambassador to Serbia, Kosovo and Bosnia for the United States Information Agency. He has performed the ten-sonata cycle of Skryabin in many important international venues, including multi-media presentations with Symbolist artworks.



He recorded the complete Skryabin Études for Supraphon and piano works of the Ukrainian composer Mykola Lysenko for Toccata Classics. He has made many recordings together with his wife, the violinist Solomia Soroka, for Toccata Classics and Naxos.

Arthur Greene is a member of the piano faculty of the University of Michigan. There he has won the Harold Haugh Award for Excellence in Studio Teaching. He and his students presented a recital series of the complete solo works of Chopin in nine concerts. He was Professor at Korea National University of Arts in Seoul for the academic year 2023–24.

**Phillip Silver** is an internationally acclaimed solo and collaborative artist. The *Frankfurter Rundschau* described his playing as ‘virtuosic’, *Haaretz* commented upon his ‘superb technical ability that enthralled the audience with melody, lyricism and poetry’, *The Boston Globe* called him ‘an international collaborative pianist of the first rank’, and *The Jerusalem Post* described him as ‘a superb accompanist whose work is marked by sensitivity, felicity of style and an inborn musicianship which unerringly directs him to the most appropriate musical gesture’. He has performed in many of the world’s leading concert-halls, including Carnegie Hall in New York, the Queen Elizabeth and Wigmore Halls in London, the Royal Concert Hall in Glasgow, the Alte Oper in Frankfurt, the Mozarteum in Salzburg and the Israel Museum and Henry Crown Theater in Jerusalem. Over the course of his career he has performed with many distinguished artists, among them Albert Markov, Alexander Markov, Elmar Oliveira, Jian Wang and Denes Zsigmondy. He has also been a member of the Van Leer Chamber Players in Jerusalem, the Rachmaninov Trio in the UK and the Silver Duo, a long-established ensemble with his wife, the cellist Noreen Silver.



Several of his recordings have been released on Toccata Classics, including an album of chamber music by an Italian-Jewish victim of the Nazis, Leone Sinigaglia (TOCC 0025), with Solomia Soroka and Noreen Silver, and another with chamber music by the German-Jewish Bernhard Sekles (TOCC 0147), also with Solomia Soroka and Noreen Silver. Reviewing this recording in *Fanfare*, Maria Nockin commented upon the ‘brilliantly played fireworks from the pianist’; Steve Arloff, writing for MusicWeb International, described it as ‘a really valuable discovery’ marked by ‘flawless playing’.

Phillip Silver also works closely with a number of Israeli composers and is active in bringing their music to a wider international public. He has been on the faculties of Glasgow University, Strathclyde University and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow, and is currently a Professor of Piano and Music History at the University of Maine, Orono.



Recorded on 3 February 2019 in the Britton Recital Hall (Cole) and 20 and 21 August 2023 (Huss and Schoenefeld) in the McIntosh Theatre, University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance, Ann Arbor, Michigan  
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Produced by Solomia Soroka and Dave Schall

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# LOST AMERICAN VIOLIN SONATAS Volume One

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## ROSSETTER GLEASON COLE

1866–1952

**Sonata for Violin and Piano in D major, Op. 8** (publ. 1917) **29:46**

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| 1 I <i>Allegro moderato</i>                     | 8:56 |
| 2 II <i>Scherzo. Presto – Andante – Tempo I</i> | 6:29 |
| 3 III <i>Adagio –</i>                           | 6:28 |
| 4 IV <i>Allegro con moto</i>                    | 7:53 |

## HENRY HOLDEN HUSS

1862–1953

**Violin Sonata, Op. 19** (c. 1894) **21:21**

- |                              |      |
|------------------------------|------|
| 5 I <i>Allegro con moto</i>  | 9:07 |
| 6 II <i>Adagio sostenuto</i> | 5:27 |
| 7 III <i>Allegro molto</i>   | 6:47 |

## HENRY SCHOENEFELD

1857–1936

**Sonata in G minor, quasi Fantasia, Op. 53** (publ. 1903) **25:24**

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 8 I <i>Allegro con spirito e energico</i>   | 12:00 |
| 9 II <i>Romanze: Andante cantabile e espressivo – Allegro moderato e tranquillo – Andante</i> | 7:12  |
| 10 III <i>Rondo: Vivace</i>   | 7:12  |

**TT 77:33**

FIRST RECORDINGS

**Solomia Soroka, violin**

**Arthur Greene, piano** 1–4

**Phillip Silver, piano** 5–10