

SONATA FORUM NO. 5

LOST AMERICAN VIOLIN SONATAS VOLUME TWO

CLARA KATHLEEN ROGERS

Sonata Dramatico

for Violin and Piano, Op. 25

ALBERT STOESSEL

Violin Sonata in G major

JULIUS CHAJES

Violin Sonata in A minor

Solomia Soroka, violin

Arthur Greene, piano

Phillip Silver, piano

INCLUDES FIRST RECORDINGS



TOCCATA
NEXT



LOST AMERICAN VIOLIN SONATAS, VOLUME TWO

Solomia Soroka and Phillip Silver

My first recording 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.¹ Of course, I went back to look for more, and this time discovered a monumental sonata by the obscure composer Rossetter Cole, of whom I had never heard.² While my husband (the pianist Arthur Greene) and I were excitedly learning this epic piece, we discovered to our amazement that Rossetter Cole was from our hometown of Ann Arbor, Michigan, a hundred and forty years earlier. He had graduated from Ann Arbor High School and the University of Michigan and was married there; researching him further, we found his grave in the local cemetery. That's how the quest for more music like this work began.

Most of the sonatas in this series were written at a time when American audiences were primarily fascinated with German composers (the Chajes sonata is from some decades later). Even though many American composers were trained in Germany, their works were not widely performed in American concert halls. I believe this is at least part of the reason that such treasures, although 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. Our hope is that these two albums (and there's more to come) will spark a renaissance for these gifted American composers and their music.

SS

¹ Released on Toccata Classics TOCC 0085.

² Recorded on the first volume of this series, Toccata Next TOCN 0046.

CLARA KATHLEEN ROGERS

1844–1931

Sonata Dramatico in D minor, Op. 25 (c. 1888)

Clara Kathleen Rogers was a pioneering figure in nineteenth-century American music, celebrated for her achievements as a composer, operatic singer and influential teacher of voice. Born in Cheltenham, England, Clara Kathleen (*née* Barnett) came from a distinguished musical family: her grandfather, Robert Lindley, was a noted cellist and her father, John Barnett, was a tenor and composer of the opera *The Mountain Sylph*.³ She was thus immersed in music from a young age. Aged twelve, she travelled with her family to Germany to study at the Leipzig Conservatoire, becoming its youngest-ever student. There she studied piano, violin, cello, voice, harmony and part-writing, and graduated with honours at the age of sixteen. Though composition courses were initially closed to women, her talent earned her special permission to study the subject. At age thirteen, she composed the first movement of a string quartet, which was championed by her classmate Arthur Sullivan (later of Gilbert and Sullivan fame), who organised its performance.

Performing under the stage name Clara Doria, Rogers launched her operatic career in 1863 in Turin, making her debut as Isabelle in Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable*.⁴ She toured Italy for several years, earning acclaim in Genoa, Naples and Florence before returning to London to continue her concert career. Starting in 1871, she toured the United States with the Parepa-Rosa Opera Company, and the Maretzek troupe, a prominent Italian-opera touring company. She retired from the stage in 1878 after marrying a Boston lawyer, Henry Munroe Rogers.



³ Barnett (1802–90) wrote three operas, but *The Mountain Sylph* (1834) was the only one to enjoy popular success, to the extent that it was parodied in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe* (1882).

⁴ There may have been a family connection there: her grandfather, a Prussian Jew – a jeweller – named Bernhard Beer (he changed it to Barnett when he settled in London), is said to have been a cousin of Meyerbeer, whose real family name was also Beer. Her father, John Barnett, was the uncle of another composer, John Francis Barnett (1837–1916).

Settling in Boston, Rogers became a vital force in American musical life. She turned her focus to composition, teaching and writing, and became a central figure in the vibrant artistic circles of the city, maintaining close friendships with such notable figures as Amy Beach, Margaret Ruthven Lang, George Chadwick and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who wrote poetry for her to set to music. Through the weekly musicales she hosted in her home, Rogers promoted the work of emerging and established artists alike.

In 1902, she joined the faculty of the New England Conservatory as a professor of voice, where she became a highly respected teacher and published numerous influential books on vocal technique, diction and musicianship. She described teaching as ‘a supreme delight – amounting at times almost to intoxication’.⁵ Her written legacy includes six pedagogical texts and three autobiographical volumes chronicling her rich musical life.

In her book *The Story of Two Lives*, published posthumously, Rogers wrote of her regret that she and other women were denied the opportunity to study orchestration at conservatories.⁶ That prohibition was the reason she had concentrated on composing music for smaller groups. In addition to her vocal pieces, her three major works are the Sonata for Violin and Piano, the Sonata for Cello and Piano, and Fantasia for Violoncello and Piano.

Clara Kathleen Rogers died in Boston in 1931. Her manuscripts and letters are preserved at Harvard University, a testament to a life devoted to music, education and the cultivation of American artistic culture.

The (ungrammatically entitled) *Sonata Dramatico* in D minor, Op. 25, was premiered in 1888 at the first concert of the Manuscript Club in Boston, at the home of John L. Gardner. Charles Martin Loeffler was the violinist, with Rogers at the piano; it was published by Arthur P. Schmidt in 1893. The first movement, *Allegro* [1], launches the work with energy and clarity, contrasting bold, impassioned themes with lyricism. The following *Andante con espressione* [2] unfolds with a haunting, inward beauty, its long melodic lines and restrained harmonies creating an atmosphere of quiet introspection.

⁵ *Memories of a Musical Career*, The Plimpton Press, Norwood (Mass.), 1932, p. 118.

⁶ *The Story of Two Lives: Home, Friends, and Travel*, The Plimpton Press, Norwood (Mass.), 1932, p. 119.

A radiant, heroic theme launches the finale, marked *Allegro gioioso* [3], ultimately culminating in a shimmering, celestial coda.

The creation of the sonata was a result of Rogers' fascination with a book by Alfred Percy Sinnett: *Esoteric Buddhism*.⁷ In her *The Story of Two Lives*, she described how the piece was conceived: 'I poured forth my conception of all the phases – with its pitfalls and temptations – through which an Initiate must pass on the road to the final goal. [...] each accepted idea seemed to find its own note in my scale, and form harmony on the keynote of my being.'⁸

PS/SS

ALBERT STOESSEL

1894–1943

Sonata for Violin and Piano in G major (early 1920s)

Albert Stoessel was a prominent yet under-recognised figure in the development of American classical music in the earlier decades of the twentieth century. Born in St Louis, Missouri, and trained as a violinist in Berlin under the tutelage of Willy Hess and Emanuel Wirth, Stoessel gained early distinction as a performer before turning to composition, conducting and music education. His career included important positions as the conductor of the Worcester Festival in Massachusetts (1925–33), director of music at New York University (1923–38) and a prominent faculty position at the Juilliard School of Music. He was also, during the summer sessions in the 1920s and '30s, active at the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau, France, a centre of transatlantic musical exchange that shaped a generation of American composers and performers. There he was a recurring member of the conducting faculty and served as the Director of the Orchestra and Conducting Department.⁹



⁷ The Riverside Press, Cambridge (Mass.), 1884.

⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 197.

⁹ John Tasker Howard, *Our American Music: Three Hundred Years of It*, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York, 1939, pp. 701–3.

Stoessel's Sonata for Violin and Piano in G major, probably composed around 1920,¹⁰ reflects his immersion in both European and American musical idioms. While a definitive autograph manuscript or date for the premiere has not yet been established, stylistic features and pedagogical references suggest the work emerged during Stoessel's tenure in New York.¹¹ The sonata follows the traditional three-movement structure and reveals Stoessel's craftsmanship as well as his sensitivity to the evolving language of American art-music of the interwar years. The first movement, marked *Allegro moderato* [4], opens with a broad, expressive theme introduced by the violin, immediately demonstrating Stoessel's melodic gift. Harmonically, the movement straddles late-Romantic tonality with hints of Impressionist colour, showing a clear lineage from Brahms and Franck, but also drawing subtly on the modal freedom associated with French composers such as Fauré and Debussy. The piano-writing is more than mere accompaniment; it weaves a contrapuntal texture that balances lyricism with rhythmic vitality. The second movement, a *Lento* in ternary (ABA) form [5], offers an introspective contrast. The outer sections present a plaintive violin melody over transparent piano voicings, whereas the middle section introduces more chromaticism and a sense of harmonic instability. The influence of Stoessel's European training is apparent in his use of thematic transformation and voice-leading, but the overall tone of restrained melancholy may also reflect a growing American aesthetic of emotional understatement, akin to that of contemporaries such as Charles Griffes or early Samuel Barber.¹² The final movement, marked *Allegro scherzando* [6], is rhythmically driven and filled with humour and momentum. Its irregular accents, syncopation and subtle use of American folk-idioms suggest the influence of Neo-Classicism and the populist style of the 1920s.¹³ The dance-like energy and sparkling dialogue between the violin and piano recall the wit of Prokofiev or early Copland, and yet Stoessel's voice remains distinct in its elegance and restraint.

¹⁰ It was published by The Boston Music Co. in 1921.

¹¹ Charles E. Claghorn, *Biographical Dictionary of American Music*, Parker Publishing, Clarkstown (NY), 1973, p. 426.

¹² Joseph Horowitz, *Classical Music in America: A History of Its Rise and Fall*, W. W. Norton & Co., New York, 2005, pp. 215–18.

¹³ Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life: A History*, W. W. Norton & Co., New York, 2001, p. 582.

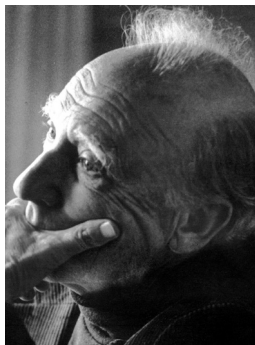
Although Stoessel's compositional output is relatively modest compared with his activities as a conductor and educator, the Violin Sonata exemplifies his capacity for expressive writing and his grasp of idiomatic instrumental technique. It also reflects a period in American music when composers were seeking to balance European training with emerging national identity. As noted by Carol J. Oja, this period was marked by 'a cultural negotiation between imported musical authority and indigenous creativity'.¹⁴ Stoessel's Sonata stands as a compelling example of that negotiation – a work poised between tradition and innovation – but, like many of his compositions, it fell into relative obscurity after his death in 1943.¹⁵ Its rediscovery can contribute to a fuller understanding of American music-history and the diverse voices that shaped it beyond the canonical few. Stoessel's Violin Sonata is a rewarding work that deserves renewed attention for its compositional integrity, its expressive range, and its place within the broader tapestry of early twentieth-century American chamber music. PS

JULIUS CHAJES

1910–85

Violin Sonata in A minor (publ. 1944)

Julius Chajes was a pianist, conductor and composer whose music was well-known in the Jewish-American community in the mid-twentieth century. Born into a cultured, secular Jewish family in Lviv in western Ukraine (known as Lemberg during the Habsburg period, and Lwów in Poland between the two World Wars),¹⁶ Chajes began piano studies at the age of seven with his mother, Velerja Chajes, a professional pianist, and wrote his first composition and gave his first recital at nine. Recognising his prodigious talent, his father, who was a physician and the director of the Jewish hospital



¹⁴ *Making Music Modern: New York in the 1920s*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2000, p. 4.

¹⁵ David Ewen, *American Composers: A Biographical Dictionary*, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1982, p. 659.

¹⁶ According to the Austrian census of 1910 (the year of Chajes' birth), which listed religion and language, 28% of the population of Lviv were Jews. Most were deported to death camps during the Nazi occupation in 1941–44.

in Lviv, took him to Vienna to study with the legendary Richard Robert (1861–1924) at the same time that Rudolf Serkin was Robert's student.¹⁷ Later Chajes continued his studies with Moriz Rosenthal (a fellow Lemberger) and Hugo Kauder, both of whom also settled in the United States. At age fifteen, Chajes performed his own piano concerto (*Romantic Fantasy*) with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. In 1934 he was a winner of the 'Ehrenpreis' ('honour prize') in the First Vienna International Competition for Pianists, where the jury included Alfred Cortot.

From 1934 Chajes spent two years in Palestine, immersing himself in the Jewish cultural renaissance. He encountered Yemenite chants, Hasidic *nigunim* and pioneering Zionist songs that profoundly transformed his musical voice, and he became part of a generation of composers who fused European classical forms with Jewish and Middle Eastern folk idioms – and yet Chajes' musical identity remained distinct: not simply that of a 'composer who was Jewish', but one who consciously sought to be a Jewish composer.

In 1938, the family fled to the United States. Chajes soon established himself as a composer of stature, with his setting of *Psalm 142* for chorus and organ being performed at the 1939 New York World's Fair and later by major Jewish and interfaith institutions. Settling in Detroit in 1940, he became a vital force in the cultural and Jewish life of the city. For over four decades, he directed the Center Symphony Orchestra (which he had founded) of the Jewish Community Center, served as music director at Temple Beth El, taught at Wayne State University and continued to compose and perform, frequently championing his own works from the keyboard.

Chajes' compositional output includes orchestral works, chamber music, art-songs, synagogue music and choral settings. His *Hebrew Suite* for clarinet, string quartet and piano, Cello Concerto and operatic cantata *The Promised Land* exemplify his stylistic blend of European Romanticism and Jewish musical heritage. In his new American homeland Chajes remained deeply connected to Israel and Jewish cultural revival. The legendary Polish violinist Henryk Szeryng, who often played the Chajes Violin Sonata, wrote the following about Chajes in 1978: 'His music is for Israel what is Chopin's

¹⁷ Robert's other students included Hans Gál, Clara Haskil and Georg Szell.

Detroit, August 3, 1978

To whom it may concern:

It is my privilege to acknowledge the work of the eminent composer Julius Chajes, whose contribution to music in general has long been recognized throughout the world. One of the important aspects of his creativity is his deep knowledge of the heritage of Jewish music. His music is to Israel what Chopin's was to Poland, de Falla's to Spain, and Bartok's to Hungary.

Knowing his violin sonata, which is imbued with Jewish idiom, I have suggested that he write a violin concerto, to enrich the literature for violin and orchestra. Israel has given birth, directly and indirectly, to most of the finest violinists of our time. It would be only fair that a major concerto inspired by that country be made available to the entire world.

I understand that it is the desire of Maestro Chajes to write his concerto in Jerusalem, where his need for the atmosphere to compose in inspirational surroundings would be fulfilled. Any assistance in this respect that could be given to him would meet with my heartiest endorsement.



Henryk Szeryng

Summer 1978

Courtesy of Professor J. H. Chajes

Letter from Henryk Szeryng probably intended for Teddy Kollek, Mayor of Jerusalem from 1965 to 1993: Szeryng hoped that Kollek might commission a concerto from Chajes on his behalf

for Poland, de Falla's for Spain, or Bartók's for Hungary'.¹⁸ Though never a household name, Chajes left behind a small but masterful body of work – around 70 published compositions – marked by craftsmanship, warmth and enduring devotion to Jewish identity and culture.

Chajes' four-movement Violin Sonata in A minor, published in 1944, is his only known work for violin and piano. It reflects his synthesis of the Viennese Romantic idiom with melodic material inspired by his earlier immersion in Yemenite, Hasidic and Palestinian folk-music. Although written in Classical cyclic form, it is essentially monothematic, creating a feeling of obsession. The first movement, *Allegro appassionato* [7], is in sonata form; its emotional range is expanded to the maximum. The second movement, *Poco adagio*, entitled 'Mourner's Prayer' [8], is short and calm on the surface, and it serves as a prelude to the Scherzo, the third movement, *Commodo* [9], which follows *attacca*, and explodes into emotional heights. The fourth movement, *Allegro con moto* [10], is again in sonata form, with two themes, both melancholic in character, that rather blend together than contrast with each other. There is a surprise at the end of this unusual and exotic composition – a brilliant and unexpected coda.¹⁹

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¹⁸ Open letter, dated 3 August 1978 (e-mail from Professor J. H. Chajes, dated 23 December 2025).

¹⁹ An exhaustive analysis of Chajes' A minor Sonata can be found in David Nathan Goldblatt, *Julius Chajes (1910–1985): Defining His Post-1930 Style*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Florida, Gainesville, 2012, pp. 123–259.

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 music-education 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, Germany, France, Italy, the Czech Republic, 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 Symphony Hall 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.



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LOST AMERICAN VIOLIN SONATAS Volume Two

CLARA KATHLEEN ROGERS

1844–1931

Sonata Dramatico for Violin and Piano, Op. 25 (1888)*

22:10

① I *Allegro* –

7:37

② II *Andante con espressione*

6:06

③ III *Allegro giojoso*

8:27

ALBERT STOESSEL

1894–1943

Sonata for Violin and Piano in G major (c. 1920)

25:26

④ I *Allegro moderato*

8:47

⑤ II *Lento*

9:22

⑥ III *Allegro scherzando*

7:27

JULIUS CHAJES

1910–85

Sonata in A minor (publ. 1944)*

18:47

⑦ I *Allegro appassionato*

6:37

⑧ II *Mourner's Prayer: Poco adagio* –

2:21

⑨ III *Scherzo: Commodo*

2:44

⑩ IV *Allegro con moto*

7:05

TT 66:36

* FIRST RECORDINGS

Solomia Soroka, violin

Phillip Silver, piano ①–⑥

Arthur Greene, piano ⑦–⑩