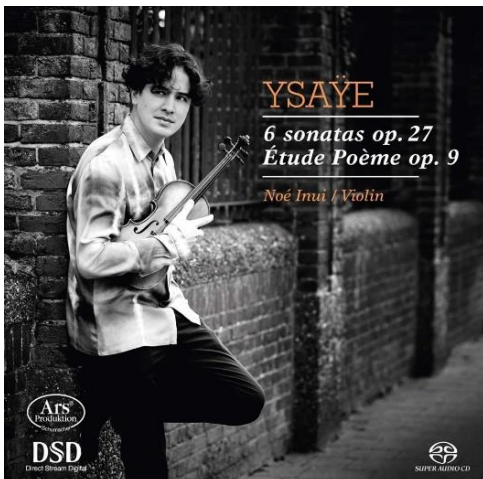


## Violinistic soulmates across the decades

Noé Inui records all the sonatas for solo violin by Eugène Ysaÿe



Eugène Ysaÿe (1858 – 1931):

### SIX SONATAS FOR VIOLIN SOLO OP. 27

- [1] – [4] SONATA NO. 1 (DEDICATED TO JOSEPH SZIGETI)
- [5] – [8] SONATA NO. 2 (DEDICATED TO JACQUES THIBAUD)
- [9] SONATA NO. 3 (DEDICATED TO GEORGES ENESCO)
- [10] – [12] SONATA NO. 4 (DEDICATED TO FRITZ KREISLER)
- [13] – [14] SONATA NO. 5 (DEDICATED TO MATHIEU CRICKBOOM)
- [15] SONATA NO. 6 (DEDICATED TO MANUEL QUIROGA)

### ÉTUDE POÈME OP. 9 – SERENADE (DEDICATED TO LOUIS SIEGEL)

- [16] ALLEGRETTO POCO SCHERZANDO

### Noé Inui *Violine*

Mario Häring *Piano* (only track [16])

Ars Produktion // ARS 38269// 6 September 2019

The Düsseldorf-based violinist Noé Inui has devoted his latest studio production to his famous Belgian compatriot Eugène Ysaÿe. The CD includes not only all "Six Sonatas for Solo Violin" op. 27, but also the world-premiere recording of the "Étude-Poème" in G minor – all of it played using a bow that once belonged to Ysaÿe himself.

Eugène Ysaÿe and Noé Inui – the connection between these two violinists has something almost magical about it: both were born in Belgium on a July 16, the former in 1858 and the latter in 1985. "The inversion of the numbers 58-85 around a hundred years apart almost makes me believe there is a fateful connection between Ysaÿe and me," says the 34-year-old Inui, who, just like his great predecessor, knows how to electrify audiences in the USA as well with his performances. The Washington Times, for instance, described his playing as displaying "dazzling pyrotechnics – Mr Inui burned through the piece with obvious passion, relish and delight." And on his New York debut, The Strad praised him for his "mesmerising energy and tremendous talent", which enabled him "not only to impress audiences, but also to transport them into and beyond the music."

This musical cosmopolitan with a Greek mother and a Japanese father, who has lived in Düsseldorf since 2006, also gained his violinistic skills in the direct tradition of his great compatriot, who was a respected professor at the Brussels conservatory: "Having been born in Brussels and learnt instrumental technique in a line from Ysaÿe (under Jacques Dupriez and Carlo Van Neste), this connection seems to have a growing symbolic significance for me the more I see of the world and share my music with others."

**Eugène Ysaÿe** (1858-1931) was an exceptional figure in the increasingly diverse musical world at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century. Initially celebrated as a new star in the waning virtuoso era of the "devil's violinists" (sometimes playing together with the pianist Ferruccio Busoni), "Eugène le Magnifique", as he was dubbed by Mathieu Crickboom, was also concertmaster of the Bilsesche Kapelle (the later Berlin Philharmonic). Later, the "Czar of the Violin" (Nathan Milstein's title for Ysaÿe) changed his focus to conducting and composing. His "**Six Sonatas for Solo Violin**" op. 27 were written in 1923/24 and are now core works of the standard violinistic world literature. In them, Ysaÿe makes connections with the epochal solo sonatas by J.S. Bach, whom he revered, and uses each of the pieces to exemplify the subsequent

stylistic developments by referencing (and dedicating the works to) six outstanding virtuosos of his time. "The palette of characters ranges from elegant severity (Szigeti, Crickboom) to severe elegance (Kreisler), along with rhapsodic soul and wit (Enesco), Spanish fire (Quiroga) and lyrical tenderness (Thibaud)", says the musicologist Michel Stockhem. For Inui, these pieces have been like musical companions his entire life: "These solo sonatas accompanied me during my musical training from the age of 14. Ysaÿe has left us a treasure of immeasurable value here, one that is magnificent for the diverse spectrum it contains, but often underestimated because the pieces are often used as a kind of barometer for technique in the big international competitions."

The "Six Sonatas for Solo Violin" op. 27 – particularly taken as a whole – are indeed considered one of the biggest of all interpretational challenges, as the individual pieces display extremely disparate character traits and emotional breadths, while, of course, bristling with the highest technical demands. A mature artist with a strong personality and self-reflection is needed if the pieces are not to become either bravura exercises in finger technique or meditative, contemplative homages to the past. "I am happy here to be able to come up with a more personal approach to this opus, free of any kind of conformity," Noé Inui says.

And for this complete recording of the sonatas, he has had the good fortune to be able to use "authentic hardware": he plays with a **historical Sartory bow** that Queen Elisabeth of Belgium gave to Ysaÿe as a present in 1929, and also put the "**Ysaÿe**" **E string**, reproduced on the model of the strings found in the French Corelli workshops, on his violin, a Tomasso Balestrieri (Mantua) of 1764.

The CD is rounded off by the **world-premiere recording of the "Étude-Poème" in G minor**. Ysaÿe wrote it, along with three companion works, in the summer of 1900. The pieces are fascinating documents of a watershed era in which many new concepts arose in the arts and much that had been previously established was called into question. The composer himself reflected on his "Études-Poèmes" as follows: "It is not bars that fill music with life. Life, that is the rhythm, and rhythm is the negation of the regular bar."

Eugène Ysaÿe once said that a violinist did not have to be just a good musician, but also a thinker, a poet and, not least, a human being. He said it was essential for interpreters to know what hope, love, passion, and even despair feel like so they could reproduce the range of feelings hidden in the musical notes. With this new CD, Noé Inui meets these demands of his great soulmate in their entirety – and creates a fresh monument to him that is definitely worth hearing. Anyone who wants to hear Inui's playing of Ysaÿe live as well will have the opportunity at the **Album-Release Concerts** in **Brussels** (23 October, Srofilia), **Düsseldorf** (24 October, Galerie Philhara) and **The Hague** (2 November, Glazen Zaal).

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