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**SCOTTISH FANTASY:
JOSHUA BELL & THE ACADEMY OF ST MARTIN IN THE FIELDS**
**Bell's first recording of Bruch's *Scottish Fantasy* and
his new recording of Violin Concerto No. 1**



Available June 22, 2018 on Sony Classical

A new Sony Classical release from Grammy Award-winning violinist **Joshua Bell** showcases two masterpieces from romantic composer Max Bruch. Available June 22, the album features Bell's first recording of the virtuosic *Scottish Fantasy* as well as a new recording of the Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, which he first recorded over thirty years ago with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and Sir Neville Marriner. Now, as Music Director of the Academy, Bell both performs and directs the orchestra, and offers a fresh take on the Bruch Concerto in addition to a thrilling performance of the *Scottish Fantasy*.

In recent years, the *Scottish Fantasy* has become a favorite performance piece of Bell's. His affection for the *Fantasy* runs deep, with good reason: "My father's descendants were from Scotland, and I grew up hearing stories about how my great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather fought in the Black Watch in Scotland. My dad was proud of his Scottish heritage, and this connection makes the melodies in Bruch's *Scottish Fantasy* even more meaningful to me." The *Fantasy* bristles with the snap and lilt of Scottish folk songs, and Bell goes on to say, "It is one of the most beautiful and touching pieces I know, and so brilliantly orchestrated. It is a unique 'concerto,' not following the traditional three-movement form. Each of its four movements tells a story."

Bell recalls how Bruch's ever-popular Violin Concerto No.1 was the first major concerto he learned as an 11-year-old. "This piece is connected to so many memories!" Bell mentions that the great nineteenth-century violinist, Joseph Joachim, who figured prominently in Bell's recent Sony Classical release, *For the Love of Brahms*, placed Bruch's concerto in the same league as those of Beethoven, Brahms, and Mendelssohn, and called it "the most seductive of violin concertos." Bell says, "It is a huge audience favorite because it is so rich and lush. It has excitement, power, passion, and intimacy--it's got everything!"

"Now after more than thirty years of performing this concerto and with a variety of conductors, I am still inspired by the work, and I continue to find myself exploring fresh ideas and new possibilities for expression. As Music Director, I now have the opportunity to conduct while playing the solo part and it actually brings a whole new dimension to this piece. The

Academy of St Martin in the Fields has become my musical family over the past decade, and I feel we have special chemistry!"

About Joshua Bell

With a career spanning more than 30 years as a soloist, chamber musician, recording artist, and conductor, Joshua Bell is one of the most celebrated violinists today. An exclusive Sony Classical artist, Bell has recorded more than 40 albums garnering Grammy, Mercury, and Gramophone awards. Named the Music Director of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields in 2011, Bell is the only person to hold this post since 1958, when Sir Neville Marriner formed the orchestra.

Recently released is ***Joshua Bell – The Classical Collection***, a 14-CD set of albums of classical repertoire he recorded for the label over a 20-year period. Displaying unique breadth, versatility, and breathtaking virtuosity, this collection showcases Joshua Bell in cornerstones of the violin concerto, chamber, symphonic, and solo repertoire.

Bell recently spearheaded two tech-focused projects: the ***Joshua Bell Virtual Violin*** with Embertone, the leading virtual instrument sampling company, created for producers, artists, engineers, and composers, and the ***Joshua Bell VR Experience*** with Sony PlayStation, featuring Bell performing in full 360-degree VR, and available for free download on Sony PlayStation 4 VR.

Convinced of the value of music as an educational tool, Bell is a member of Turnaround Arts and Education Through Music, which provide arts education to low-performing elementary and middle schools.

Bell performs on the 1713 Huberman Stradivarius violin.

About The Academy of St Martin in the Fields

The **Academy of St Martin in the Fields** is one of the world's finest chamber orchestras, renowned for fresh, brilliant interpretations of the world's greatest orchestral music. Formed by **Sir Neville Marriner** in 1958 from a group of leading London musicians, the Academy gave its first performance in its namesake church in November 1959. Through unrivaled live performances and a vast recording output – highlights of which include the 1969 best-seller Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and the soundtrack to the Oscar-winning film *Amadeus* – the Academy quickly gained an enviable international reputation for its distinctive, polished and refined sound. With over 500 releases in a much-vaunted discography and a comprehensive international touring program, the name and sound of the Academy is known and loved by classical audiences throughout the world.

Today the Academy is led by Music Director and virtuoso violinist **Joshua Bell**, retaining the collegiate spirit and flexibility of the original small, conductor-less ensemble which has become an Academy hallmark. Under Bell's direction, and with the support of Leader/Director **Tomo Keller** and Principal Guest Conductor **Murray Perahia**, the Academy continues to push the boundaries of play-directed performance to new heights, presenting symphonic repertoire and chamber music on a grand scale at prestigious venues around the globe. The orchestra looks forward to celebrating its 60th anniversary season in 2019/20 with exciting projects in the UK and beyond.

Complementing a busy international schedule, the Academy continues to reach out to people of all ages and backgrounds through its Learning and Participation programs. Find out more about the Academy of St Martin in the Fields at www.asmf.org.

TITLE: SCOTTISH FANTASY

**JOSHUA BELL, Violin and Music Director of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields
Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Orchestra**

Scottish Fantasy for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 46

- 1 I. Introduction: Grave, Adagio cantabile
- 2 II. Scherzo: Allegro
- 3 III. Andante sostenuto
- 4 IV. Finale: Allegro guerriero

Violin Concerto No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 26

- 5 I. Vorspiel: Allegro moderato
- 6 II. Adagio
- 7 III. Finale: Allegro energico

The album was recorded September 8-9, 2017 at Air Studios in London.

Produced and Engineered by Adam Abeshouse
Edited, Mixed and Mastered by Adam Abeshouse
Executive Producer: Joshua Bell

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Joshua Bell

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Find the Album Here

<https://JoshuaBell.lnk.to/ASMF-ScottishFantasyPR>

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