



92nd Street Y, Theresa L. Kaufmann Concert Hall
Thursday, October 27, 2011, 8 pm

“East Meets West”

MAURICE RAVEL

***Kaddish*, from *Deux mélodies hébraïques* (arr. Daniel Hope for solo violin)**

Composed 1914; 6 minutes

In 1914, Maurice Ravel wrote two pieces for voice and piano, *Deux mélodies hébraïques* (Two Hebrew Songs), for the opera singer Madame Alvina-Alvi. The composer chose two traditional songs and honored the simplicity of the original melodies by creating spare, yet atmospheric piano accompaniment for the voice. The composer was the pianist and Madame Alvina-Alvi the singer in the first performance of these songs on June 3, 1914, in Paris.

In this case, the Kaddish, originally sung in Hebrew, is not the prayer for the dead, but rather an ancient Hebrew prayer praising God and confirming the obligation of devout people to work assiduously for the establishment of the kingdom of heaven on earth. Daniel Hope's adaptation of the Kaddish melody for his own instrument is particularly apt. The melismatic, cantorial style of the ancient Kaddish is well suited to the violin, which has for centuries played such an important role in the liturgical and secular music of the Hebrew culture.

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