

66th Concert Series 2019-20



is pleased to present

Zlatomir Fung, cello

Richard Fu, piano

Saturday, October 26, 2019

Sleepy Hollow High School, Sleepy Hollow, New York

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In order to help sustain what one of our artists called this “legendary series,” we need people who can join the volunteers listed above, either as Board members or equally valued off-Board committee members. Specifics we are looking for include, but are not limited to, people with networking, editorial, business development, and/or fund-raising skills. Call us at 914-861-5080 or contact us on our website (see below); we can explore the range together.

Acknowledgments

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Program

Cello Sonata No. 1 in G Major

Grave

Allegro

Largo

Prestissimo

Domenico Gabrieli

(1659-1690)

Kitaroidia

Marshall Estrin

(b. 1996)

Cello Sonata No. 2 in A minor, Op 81

Allegro moderato

Andante cantabile

Allegro con spirit

Nikolay Myaskovsky

(1881-1950)

Intermission

Figment No. 2

Elliott Carter

(1908-2012)

Romance in A Major for Cello and Piano, Op. 69

Gabriel Fauré

(1845-1924)

Sonata for Cello and Piano No. 3 in A Major, Op. 69

Ludwig van Beethoven

Allegro, ma non tanto

Scherzo. Allegro molto – Trio

Adagio cantabile – Allegro vivace

(1770-1827)

Zlatomir Fung appears by arrangement with Young Concert Artists, 1776 Broadway, Suite 1500, New York, NY 10019, and with Kirshbaum Associates, Inc., 711 West End Avenue, Suite FKN, New York, NY 10025. www.KirshbaumAssociates.com

Next concert

Saturday, November 9, 2019, 8:00 pm at **Sleepy Hollow High School, Sleepy Hollow, NY**

Musicians from Orpheus Chamber Orchestra

Program: Octet in F Major, Op. D803, by Franz Schubert; Octet for Winds and Strings, by Jean Françaix.

Program notes

Cello Sonata No. 1 in G Major

Domenico Gabrielli (1652-1690)

A life-long resident of Bologna where he became well known as a cello virtuoso, Domenico Gabrielli was one of the first composers whose works for solo cello are still extant today. Among all the composers in Baroque-era Bologna, which was known for producing idiomatically virtuosic compositions for the cello, Gabrielli's fame grew as he liberated the cello from its previous role as an undifferentiated bass instrument, thus allowing its individual characteristics to guide music written for it.

In the 1680s when Gabrielli was composing his solo cello works, the size of the cello had yet to be standardized, but the works are specified for violoncello, not violone or bass violin. The writing requires a virtuosity that would have been difficult to attain on the larger instruments; thus it can be deduced that Gabrielli used a newer, smaller cello with wire-wrapped C and G strings when he performed his works. In all probability, he used the overhand bow hold and experimented with innovations to the bow that were occurring at the end of the 17th century.

It is generally conceded that the composition of cello continuo sonatas began unequivocally with Gabrielli's last four *Ricercars* in a manuscript of 1689. He probably also wrote his two *Sonate a Violoncello solo con Basso Continuo* in the late 1680s. The music historian Igor Markevitch states, "(Gabrielli) made use of all the cellistic technique known at that time," and calls him "the Corelli for the cello."

Sonata No. 1 has four short movements in a slow-fast-slow-fast alternation in *sonata da chiesa* form. That is characterized by its second movement, usually a fugal allegro, and the third and fourth, which were binary forms sometimes resembling the dances sarabande and gigue. In this sonata, the first movement resembles earlier sectional canzonas.

Kitaroidia

Marshall Estrin (b. 1996)

The compositions of Marshall Estrin combine complex musical ideas with rich textures and highly nuanced structural elements. A student of the composers Justin Dello Joio and then Robert Beaser at The Juilliard School, he believes that literate music is not limited to the concert hall or opera house, but frequently is found in unexpected venues such as theatre and cinema, where it often is overlooked.

In addition to composition, he has extensive musicological expertise in 19th and 20th century music of Europe and the United States. He is a published music critic and teacher of music theory and history. Beyond his work as a musician, Estrin is a scholar in Ancient Greek and Latin. He also has lectured at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Kitaroidia is an Ancient Greek term that means "a song accompanied by the kitara," an instrument that was the closest ancient Greek equivalent to the modern cello. It was a large multi-string lyre that lay across the player's lap, plucked by the fingers. It was most often used by singers to accompany themselves when performing lyric poetry, a tradition of ancient Greek verse focused on love, pain, merriment, and the trials and pleasures of human life. This piece invokes that tradition, as the solo performer expresses the broad, personal narrative of the music on a single instrument.

---note by Marshall Estrin

Cello Sonata No. 2, in A minor, Op. 81

Nikolay Yakovlevich Myaskovsky (1881-1950)

Myaskovsky was born near Warsaw, Poland, the son of an engineer officer in the Russian army.

After his mother's death in 1890, the family was brought up by his father's sister, who had been a singer at the Saint Petersburg Opera. Although he learned piano and violin with his aunt's encouragement, he entered the military like his father, completing his training as an engineer in 1902. Even so, his friends were music enthusiasts who had a significant influence on his interest in Russian nationalistic music. In 1906 he entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory, where he studied with Anatoly Lyadov and Nikloli Rimsky-Korsakov, graduating in 1911 after he had completed the first of his 27 symphonies. His friendship there with Sergei Prokofiev lasted for the rest of his life. After being severely wounded early in World War I, he returned to St. Petersburg and continued composing, becoming a professor at the Moscow Conservatory, a post he held until his death.

Myaskovsky became a leading musical figure in Russia, receiving several awards, including People's Artist of the USSR. His Symphony No. 21, written for the 50th anniversary of the Chicago Symphony, earned him the first of his three Stalin Prizes, and is his best-known work. Despite that national prominence, together with Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Khachaturian, he was denounced in 1948 by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, which accused him, through his teaching, of injecting "inharmonious music into the Soviet educational system." However, in addition to his 27 symphonies, he wrote 13 string quartets, nine piano sonatas, and many other works. Among the latter were two cello sonatas and one violin sonata. The second cello sonata, which Myaskovsky began sketching in the summer of 1948 is one of his last works.

Cello Sonata No. 2 was written in direct response to the Communist Party's Resolution on Music that had denounced him. It resurrected his good name because he gave it a kind of studied simplicity that represented a conscious return to the traditional values of Russian music as defined by the Party. He completed the sonata on January 10, 1949, and soon arranged to meet with the cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, who had performed Myaskovsky's Cello Concerto, Op. 66, four years earlier. Rostropovich premiered the piece on March 5, 1949, with pianist Alexander Dedyukhin. It was awarded the Stalin Prize, Second Class.

The first two movements, *Allegro moderato* and *Andante cantabile*, are predominantly lyrical, while the third, *Allegro con spirito*, is much more angular and virtuosic. The work's melancholy Romanticism is not as dark and introverted as that of most of the symphonies for which Myaskovsky is best known. In this late work the composer returned to the form and even the mood of his much earlier ones.

Figment No. 2

Elliott Carter (1908-2012)

As a child, Elliott Carter began writing music when most others his age were just learning to write words. When he was sixteen, he showed some of his pieces to Charles Ives, who became a mentor. At Harvard, majoring in English literature, he continued his musical studies, taking theory and composition with Walter Piston and Gustav Holst, the British composer who was a visiting professor. After completing his master's degree in music, he studied in Paris with Nadia Boulanger, the great teacher whose students included Aaron Copland among many other American composers. Back in the United States, he taught at the Peabody Conservatory, Juilliard, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Columbia, Yale, and Cornell Universities.

Carter's earliest works were admired for their vigor and solidity. Although they were obviously influenced by the music of older composers (Stravinsky, Copland, Hindemith, Ives, and Piston), they showed an independent, original mind at work, strongly rooted in traditional harmony, rich in contrapuntal textures, and free in rhythm. Later, after the mid-1940s, Carter became one of the most powerful innovators among living American composers, with his music taking on new weight. His principal large-scale works, which include four string quartets, three concertos,

three sonatas, and two symphonies, are vast in scale, often demonstrating great complexity and, sometimes, almost overwhelming dramatic expression.

The cellist Fred Sherry, who performed the world premiere of **Figment No. 2** in Alice Tully Hall in New York on December 2, 2001, has noted that, despite its short duration, it creates a long subjective psychological effect. It is more sweetly lyrical than the first Figment was, especially because the allusions to the music of Ives give it a nostalgic as well as a majestic quality.

Figment No. 2 paraphrases parts of two of Ives' works: the *Thoreau* movement of the **Concord Piano Sonata**, and the chamber piece **Hallowe'en**. Sherry says Carter thought of **Figment No. 1** as cello variations highlighting virtuosity, whereas he thought of **Figment No. 2** as a ceremonial piece. Sherry himself thinks, as he plays **Figment No. 2**, he hears the sound of bells ringing, prolonging the double stops.

Romance in A Major for Cello and Piano, Op. 69

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Fauré's musical language bridged a gap between 19th century Romanticism and music that appeared in the early 20th century. His music developed and evolved while retaining its own fundamental character, as he combined his harmonic idiom, with its subtle tonality changes, and his melodic gifts with an understanding of contemporary innovations.

In a thank-you note of late October 1889 to Countess Elisabeth Greffuhle for a stay at her chateau, Fauré confided that he had been searching for a musical theme. "I was looking for a really piercing musical phrase....It was the air I breathed in your park that brought it to me..." This phrase can be heard in the opening cello melody of this brief but colorful **Romance**; although it begins with mysterious sounding chords, the cello then soars over an arpeggio accompaniment, giving the composition an illuminating charm. The upwardly reaching phrase leads into a long, effusively-dreaming cantilena.

Romance premiered November 14, 1894, in Geneva at a Fauré Festival concert with Adolf Rehberg playing cello and the composer at the keyboard. The work was dedicated to cellist Jules Griset, who hosted frequent chamber music concerts at his home.

Sonata for Cello and Piano No. 3 in A Major, Op. 69

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

There are just ten years between Beethoven's **Cello Sonatas Nos. 2 and 3**, but the distance from the music of Op. 5 to that of Op. 69 is enormous. By the time of the latter, Beethoven had arrived at the phenomenally prolific period of his Violin Concerto, the Rasumovsky Quartets, the Coriolanus Overture, and the Emperor Piano Concerto. When he sold the publication rights to **Cello Sonata No. 3**, he grouped it with others that included his Symphonies Nos. 5 and 6, and the Trios Nos. 1 and 2, Op. 70. It was a time of great growth to solid maturity and profound mastery, when even his few minor works possess a power to which none of his contemporaries could aspire.

Beethoven began writing this sonata in 1806, using ideas that appeared in his notebooks as early as 1803; he finished it early in 1808. At the first public concert performance, in Vienna on March 5, 1809, the cellist was Nikolaus Kraft, son of Anton Kraft for whom Haydn had written his Cello Concerto in D Major. The pianist was the young Baroness Dorothea von Ertmann, a student of Beethoven's and one of the best pianists in Vienna at the time, to whom the composer dedicated his Piano Sonata in A Major Op. 101.

Cello Sonata No. 3 was dedicated to another of Beethoven's students, Baron Ignaz von Gleichenstein, one of the Secretaries of the Royal and Imperial Ministry of War, who had become one of the composer's closest friends. Gleichenstein, eight years younger than

Beethoven, was a gifted cellist, a modest man who asked Beethoven to omit from the dedication any mention of his court position.

This sonata is a work of mature breadth that shares some of the pastoral character of Symphony No. 6, Op. 68, which closely precedes it in the list of Beethoven's compositions. It replaces the powerful expression of his early cello sonatas with a free-flowing melodic stream, symphonic in character. The cello is unquestionably prominent, as Beethoven highlights its range with long, lyrical lines. In the first movement, *Allegro ma non tanto*, the cello states the noble main theme, a thoughtful cantilena melody, directly, without accompaniment; the piano's answering passage ends with a brief *cadenza*, after which the instruments reverse roles until a *dolce* cello *cadenza*. The second theme is lyrical and rhapsodic, with the cello and piano interwoven. A rich mixture of additional ideas is introduced before the whole is thoroughly developed. The second movement, *Scherzo, Allegro molto*, is condensed in form by the simple omission of conventional repetitions. The movement's Trio is more melodic, with dynamic contrasts and a bass drone. The only slow music in the sonata comes in the beautiful songlike introduction, *Adagio cantabile*, to the carefree finale, *Allegro vivace*, a sonata form movement with a happy first subject and a second melodic theme. In this movement, both instruments, but especially the piano, have demanding, virtuosic passages that create a sense of excitement. The sonata ends with a gentle, but finally jubilant, coda.

- Notes adapted from those provided by Susan Halpern

About the Artists

Zlatomir Fung, who in March was awarded First Prize and the Gold Medal at Russia's prestigious XVI International Tchaikovsky Competition, is the 10th recipient of our own Performance Award, given to a winner of the Young Concert Artists International Auditions held in New York City. He has won numerous additional awards, including first prizes at the Schoenfeld International Sting Competition, the George Enescu International Cello Competition, and the Johansen International Competition for Young String Players. Born in the United States of Bulgarian-Chinese heritage, he currently studies with Richard Aaron and Timothy Eddy at The Juilliard School. He made recital debuts earlier this year in both New York City and Washington, DC. Appearances as soloist with orchestras in the United States have include the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra, Boston Pops, and the Juilliard Orchestra conducted by Itzhak Perlman. He has performed abroad with the Georg Inescu Philharmonic Orchestra in Bucharest, the Lausanne Sinfonietta in Switzerland, and the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra in Russia.

Shanghai-born **Richard Fu** currently is studying collaborative piano at Juilliard, having previously attended Oxford University, the Royal College of Music (RCM), and Dartmouth College. Although he began as a political science major at Dartmouth on his way to becoming a lawyer, he fell in love with classical music while studying abroad in Vienna and changed focus to music midway. At Dartmouth, he received the Mark L. Lebowitz 1977 Memorial Prize for outstanding music student, capturing other awards and prizes at Dartmouth and elsewhere as well. He has performed concertos with the Oxford University Philharmonia, Dartmouth Symphony Orchestra, and Dartmouth Chamber Orchestra. He performed Stravinsky's Septet as part of RCM's collaboration with the Philharmonia Orchestra in the Stravinsky: Myths and Rituals Festival. Recent performances include recitals in Carnegie's Weill Hall, Alice Tully Hall, WQXR Radio, Sheldonian Theatre, Holywell Music Room, St. John's Smith Square, and Oxford Lieder Festival.

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