

Upcoming Events of the Seventy-Sixth Season of The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin Concerts

Unless otherwise noted, all programs take place in the West Building, West Garden Court.

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ETHEL

Blue Dress for String Quartet

Music by contemporary women composers

March 4, 3:30

—
Janoska Ensemble

Classical music with jazz, gypsy, tango,

Latin, and a dash of pop

March 11, 3:30

—
The Canales Project

Hear Her Song

A celebration of the choices of extraordinary women

March 18, 3:30

—
Benedetto Lupo, piano

Featuring solo piano works by Debussy

Celebrating *Cézanne Portraits*

March 25, 3:30

—
6821 Quintet

Presented in conjunction with the National Cherry Blossom Festival—music commissioned for previous opening ceremonies of the National Cherry Blossom Festival

March 26 / 12:10

East Building Large Auditorium

Richard Stoltzman, clarinet

Mika Stoltzman, marimba

Duo Cantando

Music by Bill Douglas, Chick Corea,

Toru Takemitsu, and John Zorn

April 1, 3:30

—
Heinavanker Ensemble

Featuring ancient Estonian songs and folk hymns

Celebrating *Michel Sittow: Estonian Painter at the Courts of Renaissance Europe*

April 8, 3:30

—
Admission to the National Gallery of Art and all of its programs is free of charge, except as noted.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that all portable electronic devices are turned off.

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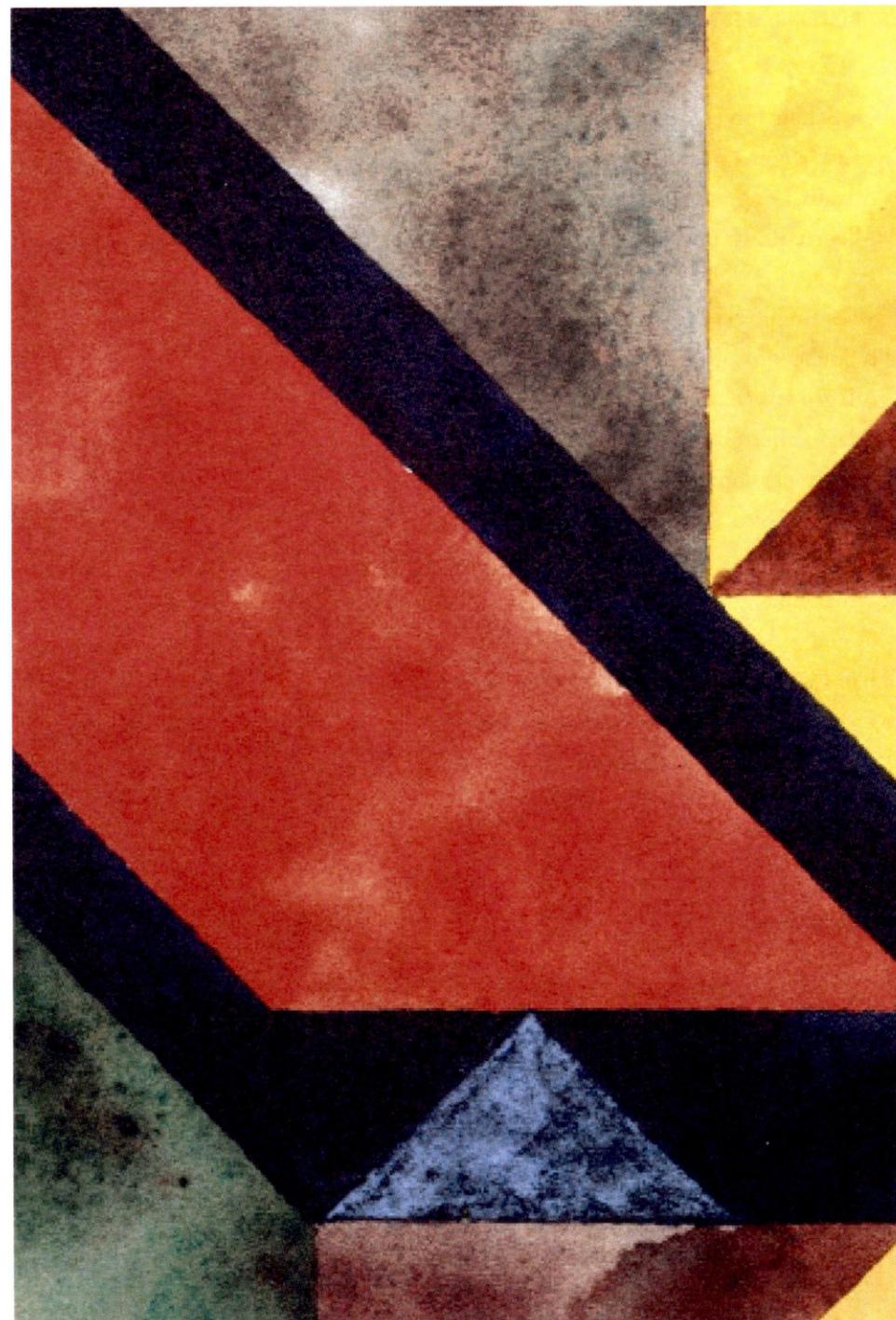
Cover Keith Anden Achepohl, *Capriccio VII* (detail), 1995, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of the Artist

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76TH SEASON OF CONCERTS

FEBRUARY 25, 2018 / NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART



Program

Narek Hakhnazaryan, cello
Noreen Cassidy-Polera, piano

FEBRUARY 25, 2018 / 3:30
WEST BUILDING, WEST GARDEN COURT

Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

Adagio and Allegro, op. 70

Adagio. Langsam, mit innigem Ausdruck

Allegro. Rasch und feurig–Etwas ruhiger–Tempo I

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Cello Sonata no. 2 in F Major, op. 99

Allegro vivace

Adagio affettuoso

Allegro passionato

Allegro molto

Intermission

Sulkhan Fyodorovich Tsintsadze (1925–1991)

Five Pieces on Folk Themes for Cello and Piano

“Villain’s Song on a Carriage”

“Tchonguri”

“Sachidao”

“Nana”

“Dance Tune”

Isaac Albéniz (1860–1909)

Asturias

Rodion Konstantinovich Shchedrin (b. 1932)

Imitating Albéniz

Jules Massenet (1842–1912)

“Méditation” from *Thaïs*

Gaspar Cassadó (1897–1966)

Requiebros

The Musicians

NAREK HAKHNAZARYAN

Since winning the Cello First Prize and Gold Medal at the International Tchaikovsky Competition in 2011 at the age of twenty-two, Narek Hakhnazaryan has performed with major orchestras across the globe to establish himself as one of the finest cellists of his generation. Hakhnazaryan has earned critical acclaim, with the *Strad* magazine describing him as “dazzlingly brilliant” and the *San Francisco Chronicle* hailing his performance as “nothing short of magnificent.” In 2014, he was named a BBC New Generation Artist and in August 2016 made his highly distinguished and critically acclaimed BBC Proms debut.

This season, Hakhnazaryan tours North America with more than a dozen performances of diverse orchestral and recital repertoire. Highlights include two concerts of Tchaikovsky’s *Nocturne for Cello and Orchestra* and *Variations on a Rococo Theme* with the St. Louis Symphony; a tour with the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra performing Robert Schumann’s Cello Concerto in A Minor at several university stops; and Dmitri Shostakovich’s Cello Concerto no. 2 with the Erie Philharmonic. Additional events include a live radio broadcast on the Dame Myra Hess Concert Series in Chicago and several recitals with pianist Noreen Cassidy-Polera with San Francisco Performances and the Peoples’ Symphony Concerts in New York. Internationally, Hakhnazaryan presents recitals at the Konzerthaus in Vienna and Wigmore Hall in London; makes his debut with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Norway’s Stavanger Symphony and at the Dresden Music Festival; and returns to perform with Ireland’s RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra.

Hakhnazaryan has been a featured soloist with the symphony orchestras of Detroit, Chicago, Seattle, Milwaukee, Toronto, London, Sydney, Tokyo, and Stockholm; the Los Angeles, Rotterdam, Czech, and Seoul Philharmonics; and l’Orchestre de Paris, among others. An eager chamber musician and recitalist, he has performed worldwide, notably in New York’s Carnegie Hall, Chicago’s Harris Theatre, Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw, Paris’s Salle Pleyel, Berlin’s Konzerthaus, Vienna’s Konzerthaus, Tokyo’s Oji Hall, and Shanghai’s Concert Hall. He has also played at esteemed festivals such as Ravinia, Aspen, Piatigorsky, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Kissinger Sommer, Beethovenfest Bonn, Pau Casals, Lucerne, and Verbier.

Hakhnazaryan has received scholarships from the Rostropovich Foundation and the Russian Performing Arts Fund, and his awards include First Prize at the 2006 Aram Khachaturian International Competition in Armenia and the 2006 Johansen International Competition for Young String Players, as well as First Place at the 2008 Young Concert Artists International Auditions in New York.

Hakhnazaryan was born in Yerevan, Armenia, into a family of musicians: his father is a violinist and his mother a pianist. Mentored by the late Mstislav Rostropovich, Hakhnazaryan received an artist diploma from the New England Conservatory of Music in 2011, where he studied with Lawrence Lesser. Prior to this, he studied at the Moscow Conservatory with Alexey Seleznyov and at the Sayat-Nova School of Music in Yerevan with Zareh Sarkisyan. Hakhnazaryan plays the 1707 Joseph Guarneri cello and F.X. Tourte and Benoit Rolland bows.

NOREEN CASSIDY-POLERA

Pianist Noreen Cassidy-Polera ranks among the most highly regarded and diverse chamber artists performing today. Her career has taken her to major music centers within the United States and abroad, with key appearances in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Seoul, and Tokyo. Recent performances have been at Carnegie Hall and the 92nd Street Y in New York, Jordan Hall and the Gardner Museum in Boston, the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, and the Louvre in Paris, as well as at the Casals and Piatigorsky festivals. She has been a guest at the Caramoor, Bard, Grand Teton, and Cape Cod Chamber Music Festivals, as well as at the Chamber Music Society of Philadelphia and the La Jolla Music Society. She has recorded for Sony, EMI, Audiophon, and Centaur Records.

In addition to her regular partnerships with cellists Amit Peled and Narek Hakhnazaryan, Cassidy-Polera has appeared with Matt Haimovitz, Carter Brey, Antônio Meneses, Aurora-Natalie Ginastera, Yo-Yo Ma, and Leonard Rose. Winner of the Accompanying Prize at the International Tchaikovsky Competition in 2014, she regularly collaborates with laureates of the Queen Elizabeth, Tchaikovsky, and Naumburg international competitions.

Cassidy-Polera’s mastery and affection for the complete standard cello-piano repertory is well-known, as is her attention and dedication to the works of living composers. In recent seasons, she performed Elliott Carter’s Sonata for Cello and Piano on tour in Paris, New York, and Philadelphia, along with new works by Lowell Liebermann, Benjamin C. S. Boyle, and Kenji Bunch to critical acclaim. Her CD recording, *Sound Vessels*, with cellist Scott Kluksdahl, features the recording premiere of Richard Wernick’s *Duo*, and works of Robert Helps, Augusta Read Thomas, and Elliott Carter. Cassidy-Polera has a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in music from the Juilliard School, where she studied with Martin Canin.

Program Notes

Robert Schumann was born in Zwickau, Germany, the son of a clergyman. Although gifted musically, he originally studied law in Leipzig. Discovering that his true passion lay in music, he devoted himself to piano and composition. In 1834, Schumann became founder and editor of *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, which provided him with income and success as a music critic. He later married Clara Wieck, a highly regarded piano virtuoso and the daughter of his music teacher, Friedrich Wieck.

The *Adagio and Allegro*, op. 70, originally written for horn and titled *Romanze and Allegro*, was composed in 1849—a productive and healthy period in Schumann’s life—and published with viola and cello parts by Schumann. This work embodies Schumann’s struggles between conflicting emotions; the tenderness of the Adagio movement, followed by the ecstatic happiness of the Allegro, shows Schumann at his most romantic.

Johannes Brahms’s Cello Sonata no. 2 in F Major was composed in the summer of 1886 for Robert Hausmann, the cellist of the Joachim String Quartet. Brahms had adopted a pattern of composing during the summer and concertizing during the winter, and beginning in 1886, he made Hofstetten on Switzerland’s Lake Thun his summer home for three years. It was here that Brahms began the Violin Sonatas no. 2 in A Major and no. 3 in D Minor, as well as today’s Cello Sonata no. 2, hence the common reference to these works as the “Thun” sonatas.

“In the Cello Sonata, passion rules, fiery to the point of vehemence, now defiantly challenging, now painfully lamenting,” the critic Eduard Hanslick wrote in a review of early performances. “How boldly the first Allegro theme begins, how stormily the Allegro flows! It is true that the passion subsides into quiet mourning in the Adagio and fades away, reconciled, in the finale. But the beating pulse of the earlier sections still reverberates, and pathos remains the determining psychological characteristic of the whole.”

Born in the Soviet Union, Sulkhan Fyodorovich Tsintsadze was one of Georgia’s foremost composers. Skilled in many genres—operas, ballets, symphonies, and concerti—his familiarity with Georgian folklore is ever present in his music. Beginning as a cellist, Tsintsadze studied at the conservatories in Tblisi and Moscow, including composition with Semyon Semyonovich Bogatyrev. In the 1940s, he performed with the Georgian State String Quartet. His compositions are based on traditional forms, but also include the styles of Shostakovich and Shebalin.

Composed in 1950, Tsintsadze’s *Five Pieces on Folk Themes for Cello and Piano* opens with a slow, pensive “Villian’s Song on a Carriage,” which explores the full range of the cello. An energetic and driving pizzicato feature with cello alone follows. The third piece, “Sachidao,” is a light romp, strongly flavored with folk harmonies and techniques that are subsequently tempered by “Nana”—a beautiful dialogue between the cello and piano filled with warmth and expression. The composition concludes with a full-bodied, fiery dance.

Asturias was originally written for solo piano in the early 1890s by Catalan composer Isaac Albéniz. Despite its title—the name of a region in northern Spain—the piece brings to mind the distinctive flamenco music of the southern region of Andalusia. *Asturias* is perhaps Albéniz’s most frequently performed work. Written while he was living outside his homeland, it was intended to invoke the atmosphere of Alhambra, the land of the Moorish monarchs of Granada. The composition has two main melodies. First comes a determined, driving theme that builds in energy, followed by a more melancholy middle section, with a return of the opening melody to end the piece.

Renowned Russian pianist and prolific composer Rodion Shchedrin has written hundreds of compositions across the musical range that have garnered numerous awards worldwide. His works have gained popularity in the West, mainly through recordings made by Rostropovich. There are several versions of his composition *Imitating Albéniz*, and the one performed today is a short musical gem that captures the passion and zest of its namesake.

Written by French composer Jules Massenet, “Méditation” is a symphonic intermezzo from the opera *Thaïs*. Although originally written for solo violin and orchestra, the work has been adapted for a variety of settings and is considered to be one of the great encore pieces in modern classical music. Following a short introduction, a simple, longing melody is played twice, after which the mood becomes increasingly animated and passionate. The tension at the apex is calmed by a short cadenza-like passage, and the main theme returns twice more before the piece quietly dissolves to silence.

Gaspar Cassadó was a cellist and composer from the Catalan region of Spain. A protégé of cellist Pablo Casals, he also studied composition with Maurice Ravel and Manuel de Falla. Cassadó’s works include nearly seventy transcriptions for cello and piano, the most popular being the Intermezzo from the opera *Goyescas* by Enrique Granados. He also wrote original works for cello, string quartet, and piano; his best-known pieces for cello and piano are the Suite for Solo Cello and the *Requiebros*.

Program notes by Kathleen Chau, Music Program Coordinator, National Gallery of Art