



presents a
Cello Recital

Yansaneh Clayton, cello
Student of Emmanuel Feldman
Paul Edward Clayton, piano

MAY 21ST, 2024

7:30 P.M.

BURNES HALL

Cello Suite No. 4 in E-Flat Major, BWV 1010

J.S. Bach

1. *Praeludium*
2. *Allemande*
3. *Courante*
4. *Sarabande*
5. *Bourrées*
6. *Gigue*

Sonata für Klavier und violoncello, Op. 38

Johannes Brahms

1. *Allegro non troppo*
2. *Allegretto quasi Menuetto*
3. *Fuga. Allegro- più presto*

Paul Edward Clayton, piano

Intermission

Malinconia, Op. 20

Jean Sibelius

Paul Edward Clayton, piano

Pezzo Capriccioso, Op. 62

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Paul Edward Clayton, piano

Sonata No. 2 for Piano and Cello

Ludwig van Beethoven

Paul Edward Clayton, piano

J.S. Bach (1685-1750): Suite No. 4 in E-flat Major for Solo Cello, BWV 1010

Johann Sebastian Bach, one of the most revered composers in Western classical music, composed his Six Cello Suites during his tenure as Kapellmeister in Köthen, between 1717 and 1723. This period marked a particularly fruitful and innovative phase in Bach's career, during which he produced some of his most beloved instrumental works.

Bach's time in Köthen was characterized by artistic freedom and patronage under Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Köthen. Unlike his later years in Leipzig, where Bach served primarily in church positions, his tenure in Köthen allowed him to focus on secular music, including instrumental compositions. It was during this period that Bach composed not only the Cello Suites but also other instrumental masterpieces such as the sonatas and partitas for solo violin, as well as the Well-Tempered Clavier. This suite features music that corresponds to ancient dance forms.

Praeludium: The Suite No. 4 in E-flat Major, BWV 1010, opens with a majestic prelude, showcasing Bach's innovative approach to polyphony and harmonic progression. The movement modulates to far-off keys and displays a wide range of emotions.

Allemande: Following the Prelude, the Allemande unfolds with grace and elegance, embodying the refined courtly dances of the Baroque era. Allemande literally means German in French, and is characterised by a brief upbeat to each section before continuing with the stately dance.

Courante: The word courante comes from the French "courir", which means "to run", which is on full display in this suite. The courante injects a sense of rhythmic vitality into the suite, with its lively tempo and intricate rhythmic patterns. Bach's inventive use of counterpoint and thematic development enlivens this dance movement, making it a joyous expression of movement and energy.

Sarabande: In contrast to the preceding movements, the Sarabande emerges as a poignant and introspective interlude. Sarabandes were originally much quicker dances with salacious lyrics, resulting in a 1583 ban from the Catholic Church. By Bach's time, sarabandes had slowed down significantly and were far more emotionally meaningful. Sarabandes are in triple time with a stressed second beat. Interestingly, this sarabande almost always has a more stressed first beat than second. Bach's use of suspensions and chromaticism imbues this movement with depth, reflecting the inner turmoil and introspection that often characterize his music.

Bourrées I & II: The pair of Bourrées that follow offer a charming contrast, with the first Bourrée exuding buoyancy and playfulness, while the second Bourrée provides a more relaxed feel. Bourrées are a type of galanterie, a non-essential and relatively light movement in the midst of the suite.

Gigue: The suite concludes with an exhilarating Gigue in triple time, characterized by its lively tempo and virtuosic flourishes. Bach's understanding of cello technique is very evident in this challenging movement, bringing the suite to a thrilling and triumphant conclusion.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897): Cello Sonata No. 1 in E minor, Op. 38

Johannes Brahms, one of the most significant composers of the Romantic era, composed his First Cello Sonata in E minor, Op. 38, during a period of profound artistic growth and personal transition. The sonata, completed in 1865, stands as a testament to Brahms' mastery of form, lyricism, and emotional depth. Brahms was born in Hamburg, Germany, and showed remarkable musical talent from an early age. Despite facing numerous obstacles, including financial hardship and difficult familial expectations, Brahms pursued his musical ambitions with unwavering determination. He established himself as a prominent pianist, conductor, and composer in the vibrant cultural scene of 19th-century Europe. Around the time of composing the First Cello Sonata, Brahms had developed a close friendship and artistic collaboration with the renowned cellist Robert Hausmann shortly after the former relocated to Vienna. This partnership inspired Brahms to explore the expressive possibilities of the cello, leading to the creation of two remarkable cello sonatas and a Double Concerto for cello and violin (Their friendship was not, however, always peaceful— in the middle of a private performance for an audience of friends, Brahms played so loudly that Gänsbacher complained that he could not hear his cello at all "Lucky for you, too", Brahms growled, and continued banging his part out).

Allegro non troppo: The sonata opens with an Allegro non troppo movement, characterized by its brooding intensity and emotional depth. Brahms beautifully weaves together contrasting themes and motifs, creating a sense of dramatic tension and impassioned lyricism— especially as the cello and piano trade parts in a ghostly conversation. The interplay between the cello and piano reflects Brahms' mastery of chamber music writing, with both instruments engaging in a dialogue of equal importance. The movement begins with a mournful theme in E minor, later modulating to C major, then arriving at a climax in B minor, before arriving in a relaxed theme in B major. The development features the various themes being thrown back and forth between the cello and piano. The B minor climax returns in a different key, before an extended version of the B major theme (now in E major) closes the movement, as the cello quietly but authoritatively silences the piano's attempts to bring the drama of the earlier themes back.

Allegretto quasi Menuetto - Trio: Brahms had an obsession with Baroque and Renaissance music, as evidenced in this minuet. Minuets had been replaced long ago by the much more popular waltz. The elegant, haughty minuet drives into the serene trio, which provides a moment of introspection before returning to the graceful minuet.

Fuga. Allegro - Piu presto: The sonata concludes with a spirited Allegro movement, brimming with energy and virtuosic flair. The movement begins with a theme, based off of Bach's contrapunctus 13 from the Art of Fugue, before developing a chaotic fugue between the cello and piano. The fugue breaks into a calm middle section, before becoming more animated and re-entering the fugal section. It ends with an even faster coda, pushing both the pianist and cellist to the brink of their capabilities.

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957): "Malinconia" for Cello and Piano, Op. 20

Jean Sibelius, the celebrated Finnish composer, is best known for his symphonic works and tone poems that evoke the grandeur and beauty of the Finnish landscape. However, his chamber music also holds a significant place in his oeuvre, showcasing his compositional mastery— one such piece is the *Malinconia*. Born in Hämeenlinna, Finland, Sibelius demonstrated exceptional musical talent from an early age. He studied composition in Helsinki and Berlin, developing a distinctive style that drew inspiration from Finnish folk traditions and the natural world. Sibelius' music played a crucial role in shaping Finland's cultural identity during a period of national awakening and political upheaval.

Sibelius and his wife were apart during New Years Day of 1900, as his wife (and most of his children) had gone to see her brother, as his daughter had just died in a typhus epidemic. After a few weeks, the epidemic reached the small town of Kerava, where Sibelius lived with his family, and on February 13, their 15-month-old daughter Kirsti died. Kirsti was the youngest child, and Sibelius was very attached to her. Sibelius was devastated by the death of his youngest daughter. His drinking, a recurring problem for Sibelius, worsened after the death of his daughter, and his grief was so great that he did not speak of Kirsti for the rest of his life. In the wake of this personal tragedy, Sibelius composed the emotional *Malinconia*. The title probably reflects Sibelius's thoughts at the time. However, Sibelius was also familiar with the painting *Malinconia* by the Finnish symbolist painter Magnus Enckell, which he saw at an art exhibition in 1895. Perhaps this was a subconscious influence that helped shape Sibelius' work.

The piece advances slowly through several themes. The virtuosity present in the piano part, and at times, the cello part, make the overwhelming grief often unbearable. One interpretation of the unusual piece is that the piano part represents the currents of Sibelius' emotions, while the cello part is his wailing. After several minutes of this outpouring of grief, the clouds fade away as he drinks his sorrow to sleep. The reality of the tragedy strikes him again, and this time is offered no respite. The piece ends with trills in the lowest registers of the cello and piano, painting an image of a broken man surrounded by empty bottles.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893): Pezzo Capriccioso in B minor, Op. 62

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky composed his *Pezzo capriccioso*, Op. 62, for cello and orchestra in a single week in August 1887. Belying its title, this work is written in the somber key of B minor, the same key as his final symphony. The *Pezzo* is not capricious in a lighthearted sense. The *capriccioso* aspect comes from Tchaikovsky's fanciful treatment of various aspects of the work's simple theme. Despite some rapid passages and a turn to the major key, Tchaikovsky preserves the basic pulse and sober mood throughout the piece. The sobriety was a result of Tchaikovsky's sufferings with his friend Nikolay Kondratyev, who was in the final throes of syphilis. After a brief remission, he had been taken to Aachen, Germany, where his family hoped the mineral waters there would prolong his life at least a few months. Instead, Kondratyev had taken a turn for the worse. He also proved to be a highly volatile and demanding patient, which unnerved the already death-shy Tchaikovsky. A visit to see friends in Paris—among them cellist Anatoliy Brandukov—proved only a brief respite. All this suffering poured through the music Tchaikovsky was writing, as well. Tchaikovsky wrote Brandukov on August 25, "I have written a small cello piece, and would like you to look through it, and put the final touches to the cello part." Two days later he had begun to make the piano score of the piece, and on 31st he began orchestrating it.

The piece begins fairly slowly with slight variations upon a somber theme. The variations eventually lead to a major section, which quickly sours and returns to B minor. After a pause, the cello launches into a middle section, which is the same tempo, albeit much faster (hence the *capriccioso*) which covers all registers of the cello before returning to the slower opening theme. This time, the variations end up in C major, where the cello quickly seizes its chance to speed up again before accelerating to the dramatic end.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827): Cello Sonata No. 2 in G minor, Op. 5, No. 2

Born in Bonn, Germany, Beethoven showed exceptional musical talent from an early age. He received training from prominent composers such as Haydn and studied piano and composition rigorously. Despite facing personal hardships, including the loss of his hearing, Beethoven's music continued to evolve, transcending the conventions of his time and pushing the boundaries of musical expression.

Around the time that the first two cello sonatas were written, Beethoven was establishing himself as a prominent figure in the Viennese music scene. He had already composed several groundbreaking works, including his first symphony and piano concertos, and was gaining recognition as a composer of remarkable skill and originality. The cello sonatas 1 & 2, opus 5, were likely written for the King of Prussia Friedrich Wilhelm II, a music lover and cellist. Beethoven played several times in his court, and the premiere was played by one of the Duport brothers, who both taught the king or served elsewhere in the court.

The Second Cello Sonata in G minor is a monumental work that showcases Beethoven's mastery of form, melody, and emotional variation. The sonata unfolds in three movements, each offering a unique exploration of mood and expression.

Adagio sostenuto e espressivo: The sonata opens with a hauntingly beautiful adagio. Floating through various melodic and rhythmic motifs, this movement sets the stage for the later two movements (with which it contrasts hugely). This introspective introduction gives way to the *Allegro*, a dynamic movement marked by its rhythmic drive and virtuosic flourishes.

Allegro molto più tosto presto: The exciting second movement features blazing passagework in the piano and commentary from the cello. The first half ends with a cadence in B-flat major, before suddenly jumping back into the intense G minor. After modulating to both D minor and D major in the development (with plenty of interplay between the cello and piano, as well as many abrupt dynamic changes), the recapitulation traverses several rapid modulations to bring the passionate movement to an abrupt close in G major.

Rondo: Allegro vivace: The third movement, a lively Rondo in G major, offers a stark contrast to the opening movements. Beethoven's wit and humor shine through in this playful and spirited movement, with the cello and piano engaging in a spirited dialogue of thematic variation and a contrapuntal game of tag. Sudden somber moments alternate with passages of virtuosic exuberance, making this movement a captivating journey of emotional contrast and exploration.