

Tuesday, November 17, 2009 ▪ 8 PM
WHITAKER CENTER

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ZUILL BAILEY, CELLO
ROBERT KOENIG, PIANO

Suite Italienne

Introduzione

Serenata

Aria

Tarantella

Menuetto e Finale

Igor Stravinsky
(1881-1971)

Sonata No. 2 in D Major, Op. 58

Allegro assai vivace

Allegretto scherzando

Adagio

Molto allegro vivace

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809-1847)

INTERMISSION

Sonata in F Major for Cello and Piano, Op. 99

Allegro vivace

Adagio affettuoso

Allegro appassionato

Allegro molto

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

ZUILL BAILEY is considered one of the pre-eminent cellists of his generation. His rare combination of compelling artistry, technical finesse, and engaging personality has secured his place as one of the most sought-after cellists today.

A consummate concerto soloist, Bailey performs with the symphony orchestras of Chicago, San Francisco, Minnesota, Dallas, Louisville, Milwaukee, Nashville, Toronto and Utah, among other leading orchestras around the world. He has collaborated with such conductors as Itzhak Perlman, Alan Gilbert, Andrew Litton, James DePriest, and Stanislav Skrowacezewski, and has been featured with musical luminaries Leon Fleisher, Jaime Laredo, the Juilliard String Quartet, Lynn Harrell and Janos Starker. Mr. Bailey has appeared at the Kennedy Center, Alice Tully Hall, the 92nd Street Y, and Carnegie Hall, where he made his debut performing the U.S. premiere of Miklos Theodorakis' Rhapsody for Cello and Orchestra.

His international appearances include celebrated performances with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra in its 50th anniversary tour of Russia, as well as concerts in the Dominican Republic, France, Israel, Hong Kong, Jordan, Mexico, Peru, and the United Kingdom. Festival appearances include Ravinia, the Interlochen Center for the Arts, Santa Fe Chamber Music, Chautauqua, Bravo!, Vail Valley, Maverick Concert Series, the Next Generation Festival and the Music Academy of the West. In addition, he was the featured soloist performing the Elgar Cello Concerto at the Bard Festival in the World Premiere of the Doug Varrone Dance Company's performance of "Victorious."

Zuill Bailey is a member of the acclaimed Perlman-Schmidt-Bailey Trio, featuring pianist Navah Perlman and violinist Giora Schmidt. In addition, he performs regularly with pianist Awadagin Pratt in recitals and chamber music. Bailey and long time duo partner, pianist Simone Dinnerstein, were awarded the Classical Recording Foundation Award for 2006 and 2007 for the recording of Beethoven's complete works for Cello and Piano released in August, 2009. Together they performed the complete Beethoven sonatas for sold out audiences at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the National Gallery in Washington, D.C.

Zuill Bailey is an exclusive recording artist with Telarc International. His "Russian Masterpieces" CD, featuring the works of Tchaikovsky and Shostakovich and performed with the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra has received widespread popular and critical acclaim. His much anticipated recording of the Complete Bach Suites for Solo Cello will be released in January, 2010.

Other recordings include a debut recital disc for Delos, Cello Quintets of Boccherini and Schubert with Janos Starker, Saint-Saëns' Cello Concertos No. 1 and 2 "Live," and the Korngold Cello Concerto with Kaspar Richter and the Bruckner Orchestra Linz for ASV.

Zuill Bailey is represented world-wide by Colbert Artists Management
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Network television appearances include a recurring role on the HBO series "Oz," along with musical features on NBC's "Homicide," A&E, NHK TV in Japan, a live broadcast of the Beethoven Triple Concerto from Mexico City, and the televised production of the Cuban premiere of Victor Herbert's Cello Concerto No. 2 with the National Orchestra of Cuba. He is heard on NPR's "Performance Today," "Saint Paul Sunday," BBC's "In Tune," XM Radio's "Live from Studio II," Sirius Satellite Radio, the KDFC Concert Series, Minnesota Public Radio WFMT Live Studio Recitals and RTHK Radio Hong Kong.

Zuill Bailey performs on a 1693 Matteo Gofriller Cello, formerly owned by Mischa Schneider of the Budapest String Quartet. In addition to his extensive touring engagements, Bailey is the Artistic Director of El Paso Pro Musica (Texas), Artistic Director designate of the Sitka Summer Music Festival and Series (Alaska) and Professor of Cello at the University of Texas at El Paso.

ROBERT KOENIG quickly established a reputation as a much sought-after collaborative pianist and chamber musician. He performs regularly in major centers throughout the world with many of this generation's most renowned musicians. Recent engagements have included performances at Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, Tokyo's Suntory Hall, The Concertgebouw, and the Louvre Museum. He has performed with many of today's leading artists including Sarah Chang, Hilary Hahn, Pamela Frank, Roberto Diaz, Elmar Oliveira, and Aaron Rosand.

Mr. Koenig has appeared at many festivals including Aspen, Ravinia, Banff, Saratoga, Caramoor, the Seattle Chamber Music Festival, El Paso Pro Musica, Chamber Music Northwest, and the Mostly Mozart Festival. He is frequently heard on radio and television including ABC's "Good Morning America" and CBS "This Morning." Mr. Koenig was staff pianist at both The Juilliard School and The Curtis Institute of Music, and from 2000-2007 he served as Professor of Piano and Piano Chamber Music at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. With the assistance of the University of Kansas Center for Research, Mr. Koenig commissioned renowned American Composer Lowell Liebermann to write a new trio for flute, cello and piano. In 2007 he was appointed Professor and Head of The Collaborative Piano Program at The University of California in Santa Barbara. Mr. Koenig has recorded for Artek, Ambassador, Biddulph, Cedille, CRI, Decca, Eroica, and Naxos. His recent CD of transcriptions for viola and piano by William Primrose was released on Naxos with violist Roberto Diaz and received a Grammy nomination for "Best Instrumental Soloist Performance" at the 49th annual Grammy Awards in 2007.

Born in Saskatchewan, Canada, Robert Koenig began his formal training at the Vancouver Academy of Music with Lee Kum Sing and Gwen Thompson and later studied at the Banff School of Fine Arts and the Academie Musicale di Chigiana in Siena, Italy. During this time he received several awards from the Canadian Government including a Canada Council Project Grant. He completed both his Bachelors and Masters degrees in Accompanying at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia where he studied with Dr. Vladimir Sokoloff and chamber music with Felix Galimir and Karen Tuttle.

Igor Stravinsky (1881-1971)

Suite Italienne for Cello and Piano

Igor Stravinsky's music can be divided into three periods: the opulent and ferociously primitive years (1905-1917) that produced *The Rite of Spring*, his so-called "Neo-Classical" period (1917-1927) which brought *Histoire du Soldat*, *Pulcinella*, the Octet and the 1924 Piano Sonata, and the third period of Serialism which saw such works as *The Rake's Progress*. As usual, categorization fails to tell the whole story and, in fact, here introduces certain inaccuracies. Stravinsky himself scorned the Neo-Classical label smacked on him with the composition of *Pulcinella*, the ballet suite from which the Italian Suite for Cello and Piano is drawn. It has been suggested, probably wrongly, that Stravinsky was inspired by the music of Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710-1736) for *Pulcinella*. Even if that were true, Pergolesi is associated with the Baroque period rather than the Classical. More important, however, is the issue of originality. On this point, Milan Kundera, in his brilliant collection of essays, *Testaments Betrayed*, is clear: "... for while Stravinsky, like no other composer before or after him, did turn for inspiration to the whole span of music, in no way does that lessen the originality of his art. And I do not merely mean that the same personal traits are always visible beneath the shifts in his style. I mean that it is precisely his vagabondage through musical history—his conscious, purposeful eclecticism, gigantic and unmatched—that is, his total and incomparable originality."

The five movements of the *Suite Italienne* reflect certain aspects of the 18th century Classical suite in their suggestion of dance forms, but still they remain unique in their own right, each one a small masterpiece. The brief *Introduzione* is Stravinsky at his most straightforward before he turns exquisitely lyrical in the lovely *Serenata*. While the cello is strongly melodic here, the piano offers a fascinating counterpart that could hardly be called mere accompaniment. Then in the following *Aria* both instruments take off in an excursion of virtuosity that builds to a climax in the brilliant *Tarentella* and finds its denouement in the stately *Menuetto e Finale*. Certainly one thing instantly recognizable as original and modern about the work is the balancing of the instruments. Despite its roots in 18th century style, the Suite reveals the cello and the piano at their most equal.

In the shifting styles throughout Stravinsky's compositional life nothing was lost, for the greatness of his music transcends stylistic changes, even the one from his lavish *Rite of Spring* period to this second, contrasting time of Suite Italienne in which he seems to draw back from that lavishness. Stravinsky said of himself that he "only continues" and that he "never returns." In his *Literature of Chamber Music*, Arthur Cohn speaks to this point when he says: "Stravinsky is an example of a great creative artist using the values obtained from older, proven conditions and restating them by way of new standards. But it is important to understand that the barbaric splendor Stravinsky displayed in his works dealing with Russian paganism was not lost because he shifted from primordial technique to a style directly opposite. Splendor exists, but it is nimble, not heavy; coolness replaces heat; the vividness is within, not only without."

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Sonata No. 2 in D Major for Cello and Piano, Op. 58

Mendelssohn's few critics suggest that he missed the mark of greatness because of his birthright as a member of the wealthy bourgeoisie. That Mendelssohn was free of the impoverishment so often associated with musical careers and that he wore his genius lightly should not be confused with his greatness. It would seem a harsh sentence for a composer whose particular genius is unmatched, so much so that Robert Schumann, in an 1840 edition of *Neue Zeitschrift*, called him the "Mozart of the nineteenth century."

Yet it was Beethoven that Mendelssohn most admired. In an 1830 letter to his composition teacher, Carl Freidrich Zelter, Mendelssohn wrote: *In your last letter you seemed to be anxious lest, following my predilection for one of the great masters, I might...be led into imitation. Such, however, is certainly not the case...Naturally, nobody can forbid me to enjoy the inheritance left by the great masters nor to continue to work at it, because not everybody has to begin at the beginning. But then it must be continued creation according to one's ability, and not a lifeless repetition of what is already there.* Continue Mendelssohn did and with anything but lifeless repetition or imitation. By the time he was twenty, Mendelssohn would conduct the first performance of *St. Matthew's Passion* since Bach's death in 1750 as well as compose his famous Octet, the first two of his six great string quartets, the overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the first of the two string quintets that would punctuate the beginning and end of his career.

Nineteenth century anti-Semitic trends, including Wagner's notorious essay, *Judaism in Music*, limited the spread of his music, and the Nazi era completely suppressed it. His memorial in Leipzig was destroyed in 1936 by the Fascists. Fortunately today his music has been restored to its rightfully high place in history. In his impressive, *The Romantic Generation*, Charles Rosen calls Mendelssohn "the greatest child prodigy the history of Western music has ever known." Furthermore, Rosen adds that Mendelssohn's models were "the most eccentric and imaginative works of the final years of Beethoven's life, the last sonatas and quartets."

The second of Mendelssohn's sonatas for cello and piano comes from 1843, the same year that produced his monumental E Minor Violin Concerto. At 34, Mendelssohn was in his prime both as a composer and conductor of the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig. That prime would be interrupted all too soon by the death of his beloved sister Fanny in 1847 and his own death six months later at the age of 38.

The first movement of the work adheres to strict Classical form despite its Romantic feel. The second movement is another display of Mendelssohn's genius at *scherzo* writing as revealed in such works as the overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and his famous Octet. This one takes an unusual turn in that the compositional key is minor but the mood is gay. The long third movement is a wonderful song in which the cello, described aptly by Arthur Cohn, is "not a gentleman but rather a rich declaimer of full Romantic estate." The *Finale* is perhaps more *scherzo* than the second movement *scherzando*. Above all it is joyful, elegant, and virtuosic.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Sonata in F Major for Cello and Piano, Op. 99

Brahms' two sonatas for piano and cello reveal his penchant for the darker voice and his extraordinary ability to combine it with what might be perceived as a warring partner. In lesser hands, the combination of cello and piano is fraught with difficulty. In Brahms, it becomes a collaboration of the highest order. While the works are blithely called "cello sonatas" on Jacqueline du Pre's historic recording, they are listed elsewhere as sonatas "for piano and cello," the same order Beethoven gave to his works in the genre. Order aside, they are two great works of immense virtuosic demand for both instruments. Much of their beauty and effectiveness can be attributed to their collaborative nature.

The second sonata for piano and cello, Op. 99, was written in 1886 and published a year later after two private performances in the homes of Brahms' friends Maria Fellingner and the well-known surgeon and amateur musician Theodor Billroth. The virtuoso cellist Robert Hausmann came from Berlin to Vienna to perform it, with Brahms himself at the piano. According to scholar George Bozarth, Hausmann "possessed a tone so large and luminous that he could easily rise above the *fortissimo* of a grand piano, a feat he was repeatedly called upon to accomplish in this sonata."

The compressed first movement lunges forward with tight developments. Arnold Schoenberg, who greatly admired Brahms' gift of development, commented that, "Nothing is repeated without promoting development."

The abandoned *Adagio affettuoso* of the earlier sonata reappears in Op. 99 and contains some of Brahms' finest melodic writing. Here there is no question of its placement.

The third movement, a *scherzo* marked *allegro passionato*, caused Brahms' friend and valued critic Elisabet von Herzogenberg to write: "I should like to hear you play the essentially vigorous *scherzo*— indeed, I always hear you snorting and puffing away at it— for no one else will ever play it just to my mind. It must be agitated without being hurried, *legato* in spite of its unrest and impetus."

The final *Allegro molto* in *rondo* form brings things to an unsettling conclusion. Herzogenberg's choice of words, *unrest* and *impetus*, seem well-chosen to describe this movement and the entire impressive and challenging work.

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