



JONAH KIM

SONGS THAT MAKE US DANCE

ARTISTS

Jonah Kim

cello

in collaboration with

Dominic Cheli

piano

featuring

Wei Wang

choreographer & dancer

Julia Rowe

ballet dancer

Ryan Lawrence

choreographer

with dancers from

Movement Arts Collective



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Sunday, October 2, 2022 at 2:00 PM

HAROLD J. MIOSSI CULTURAL & PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
CUESTA COLLEGE, SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA

Song Without Words, op. 30 no. 1

FELIX MENDELSSOHN

arr. Jonah Kim

Sonata for cello and piano in A minor, op. 36

EDVARD GRIEG

Allegro agitato

Andante molto tranquillo

Allegro molto e marcato - Presto - Prestissimo

INTERMISSION

Silent Woods from The Bohemian Forest, op. 68

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

choreography by Wei Wang, featuring dancers Wei Wang & Julia Rowe

Sonata for violoncello and piano, op. 6

SAMUEL BARBER

Allegro ma non troppo

Adagio - Presto - Adagio

Allegro appassionato

Approaching Autumn [World Premiere]

MARK ABEL

Dancing in the Eye of the Storm [World Premiere]

SHERIDAN SEYFRIED

Tambourin Chinois, op. 3

FRITZ KREISLER

arr. Jonah Kim

choreography by Ryan Lawrence, featuring dancer Julia Rowe

with dancers from the Movement Arts Collective:

Marissa Dube, Sarah Hill, Elena Hsia, Imke Lawrence, Tuhoi Spe-y, Lily-Cate Treadwell

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FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)

Song Without Words, op. 30 no. 1 (1834)

Mendelssohn coined the term Songs Without Words (*Lieder Ohne Worte* in German) to describe these miniatures he composed throughout his life. An intimate exchange between the composer and his instrument created these simple yet refined gems. These songs contain many of the core melodic ideas we hear in his compositions for other instrumentations, ranging from string quartets to full symphonies.

Eight books consisting of six songs each were compiled and published during his life. Other songs exist outside of these compilations. Some of the songs and books have dedicatees. Book II was dedicated to Elise von Woringen, a patroness in Dusseldorf. It includes a song he gifted his sister Fanny at the birth of her son.

EDVARD GRIEG (1843-1907)

Sonata for cello and piano in A minor, op. 36 (1883)

Compared with the large number of songs and orchestral pieces that Grieg wrote, his chamber works are few. The Cello Sonata followed two youthful violin sonatas and his only complete string quartet was written in 1877. Grieg wrote of that work: "It strives toward breadth, soaring flight and, above all, resonance for the instruments for which it is written." The same could be said for the Cello Sonata, a staple of the chamber repertoire that shares the excitement and mood of his famous Piano Concerto from 1869. Both compositions have dramatic openings and folk-inflected finales, and share the key of A minor. The first movement of the sonata includes a cadenza for the cello—unusual in a sonata but expected in a concerto.

Grieg was inspired by the folk music of his country. Nationalism in music emerged along with Romanticism in the early 19th century as composers turned away from the European classical tradition. The trend toward nationalism is evident in Chopin's Mazurkas; in Wagner and Verdi operas; in the music of Russia's "Mighty Handful," which included Rimsky-Korsakov and Mussorgsky; and in Smetana's and Dvořák's music, to name a few.

The expressive melodies and contagious rhythms of Grieg's dance-like movements have their roots in Norwegian folk music, and the composer's delight in folk tunes and dance rhythms overflows in the last movement of the sonata. In Grieg's own words, he "dipped into the rich treasures of native folk song and sought to create a national art out of this hitherto unexploited expression of the folk soul of Norway."

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (1841-1904)

Silent Woods, from the Bohemian Forest, op. 68 (1891)

Dvořák originally composed Silent Woods as part of a song cycle for piano four-hands. As was popularly done in his day, Dvořák transcribed multiple versions of this particular song featuring the cello. Like much of his music for cello, it was crafted for his friend, the great cellist Hanus Wihan. They performed it many times on Dvořák's farewell tour before he moved to America. The original title by Dvořák in Czech is Klid. His publisher, Simrock, changed the title in German from *Die Ruhe*, meaning The Silence, to *Waldesruhe*, meaning Silent Woods.

SAMUEL BARBER (1910-1981)

Sonata for violoncello and piano, op. 6 (1932)

Samuel Barber stands as one of America's most popular composers. In his works, Barber combines many components that could seem contradictory: his "American" voice with the European tradition; his romantic predisposition with musical modernity; and his originality with his knowledge and use of classical forms. This sonata is a good example of how he balances these elements. Barber is a splendid melodist, perhaps as a result of his abilities as a singer. (At age 14, Barber was one of the first students at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where he studied voice as well as piano and composition.)

The Cello Sonata was completed in 1932, while Barber was a student at Curtis, but it is in no way a "student piece." It is the creation of a fully mature master composer. Barber worked on the Sonata with cellist Orlando Cole, who made many suggestions; Cole and Barber gave the first performances of the piece in 1933.

MARK ABEL (b. 1948)

Approaching Autumn (2020) [World Premiere]

American composer Mark Abel is best known for his song cycles, including *The Palm Trees Are Restless*; *In the Rear View Mirror, Now*; and *Four Poems of Marina Tsvetaeva*. Abel's most recent album, *The Cave of Wondrous Voice*, signaled a shift of focus by introducing his first chamber works: *Intuition's Dance*, *The Elastic Hours* and the *Trio for Clarinet, Cello and Piano*.

For the listener who is new to Abel's music, not much guidance is needed: the flow of melody, harmony and rhythm will carry the listener along without the need to be informed about musical structures or compositional techniques. Repeated hearings will reward the listener with a greater appreciation of the music and deeper understanding of its emotional content.

Above all, it is Abel's mastery of the vocal line that informs his writing for cello in *Approaching Autumn*. The music is lyrical and accessible, unlike much that is being composed today. A sense of playfulness (also missing from much 21st-century music) permeates some sections of the piece as the cello and piano quip and converse. Abel effortlessly combines elements of jazz, rock and classical music into his own distinctive style, enfolding performer and audience alike with a wide range of tonal colors and impressions.

SHERIDAN SEYFRIED (b. 1984)

Dancing in the Eye of the Storm (2022) [World Premiere]

The "eye", or center, of a hurricane is characterized by relatively calm conditions—clear skies and light winds. Surrounding this area, however, is the "eyewall"—the most volatile and dangerous part of a storm—where a colossal barrier is formed on all sides by severe thunderstorms and devastating winds.

The opening dance-like melody in the cello is blues-inflected, dark, and groovy. It is immediately answered by a sustained, song-like idea. The piano echoes each of these ideas in its own way. Though there is no denying the rhythmic fun of this music, there is also a subtle sense of instability.

Rumbles of thunder and far-away lightning flashes appear. But we keep dancing. A new, playful melody, based on a fragment of the opening, emerges but quickly turns into an obsession. But nothing is too serious; danger is averted for the moment. Impassioned melodic outbursts emerge in the cello and are answered by the piano.

After a reprise of the opening material, the playful idea returns once more, but a darker path is taken. Storm clouds close in; the eyewall is suddenly upon us, thrashing us with wind and rain. Our dancing becomes increasingly frenzied, rising higher and higher—totally surrounded, we are trying to fly above the storm.

FRITZ KREISLER (1875-1962)

Tambourin Chinois, op. 3 (1911)

Considered the greatest violinist of all time by many, Fritz Kreisler composed many pieces that he performed and recorded himself during his life. We still enjoy many of his works as favorite encores. A master of composition as well as violin, he graduated Premier Prix from the Paris Conservatoire at age 12 in both disciplines. He attempted to move back to Vienna where he was born, but could not find his musical bearings as he was rejected by the Vienna Philharmonic. He left music to study medicine, serving in the Austrian army until he was honorably discharged for injury.

He made his comeback to violin as soloist with the Berlin Philharmonic and a series of American tours, and also premiered Elgar's Violin Concerto. He eventually moved to New York City where he lived with his wife Harriet Lies until his death.

Fritz first published his own pieces as works he "discovered" by famous composers of the past. His works range from lyrical and passionate to jaunty and playful. Virtuoso showpieces like this *Tambourin Chinois* also display his compositional command. Beginning and ending with a fast running dance, there is a swanky middle section that is equally playful and winning. His use of the pentatonic scale and parallel intervals create a sound world that was so alluring for the French masters of the 19th century.