STEVEN ISSERLIS CELLO CONNIE SHIH PIANO

"COMPOSERS & THEIR MUSES"

CLARA SCHUMANN

[1819 - 1896]

Three Romances for Violin and Piano, Op. 22 (1853) arranged by Steven Isserlis

Andante molto

Leidenschaftlich schnell (Passionately fast)

ROBERT SCHUMANN

[1810-1856]

Drei Fantasiestücke, Op. 73 (1849)

Zart und mit Ausdruck (Tender and with expression) Lebhaft, leicht (Lively, light)

Rasch und mit Feuer (Quick and with fire)

VÍTĚZSLAVA KAPRÁLOVÁ

[1915-1940]

Ritournelle for Cello and Piano, Op. 25 (1940)

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ

[1890 - 1959]

Sonata for Cello and Piano No. 1, H. 277 (1939)

Poco allegro Lento

Allegro con brio

INTERMISSION

AUGUSTA HOLMÈS

[1847-1903]

Recitatif et Chant from La Vision de la Reine (1895) arranged by Steven Isserlis

CÉSAR FRANCK

[1822-1890]

Sonata for Cello and Piano in A Major (1886)

Allegretto ben moderato

Recitativo—Fantasia. Ben moderato—Molto lento

Allegretto poco mosso

About the Program

By Steven Isserlis © 2019

COMPOSERS AND THEIR MUSES

The intertwining of music and love is an endlessly fascinating phenomenon. The three pairs of composers represented in this program were all, it seems, deeply involved with each other in a way that exercised a strong influence on their music—at least for a period of their lives. The story of Robert and Clara Schumann, their love violently opposed by Clara's father but finally prevailing, their subsequent increasingly troubled marriage and Schumann's final catastrophic breakdown and incarceration, is well known. The curious and tragic story of Kaprálová and Martinů is less so, as is that of Franck's passion for the alluring Augusta Holmès (although the latter is the subject of an absorbing novel by Ronald Harwood. César and Augusta). All three couples provided mutual musical inspiration, which we hope to illustrate through this program.

CLARA SCHUMANN (1819–1896)

arr. Steven IsserlisThree Romances for Violin and Piano,Op. 22

"Women are not born to compose." Clara Schumann's output thankfully contradicts her own somewhat infamous words. As

a young virtuoso, she produced a steady stream of music; but following her marriage in 1840, presumably fatiqued by the cares of marriage and motherhood and frightened of disturbing her neurotic husband, her output dwindled considerably. Robert himself felt guilty, writing in 1843: "Clara has written a number of smaller pieces which show musicianship and a tenderness of invention such as she has never before attained. But children and a husband who is always living in the realms of imagination do not go well with composition. She cannot work at it regularly, and I am often disturbed to think how many tender ideas are lost because she cannot work them out." Ten years later, however, things were to change (temporarily, at least) with the arrival in Düsseldorf, where Schumann was then music director of the 21-year-old violinist Joseph Joachim. The Schumanns had met him as a teenager and been thoroughly impressed; now they were bowled over. Clara wrote that Joachim played with "a depth of poetic feeling, his whole soul in every note, so ideally, that I have never heard violin-playing like it." The encounter inspired Robert to compose his monumental violin concerto: it also inspired Clara to take up her pen for the first time in several years, in order to write these Romances. There is certainly no sign of lack of compositional practice in

these beautiful pieces, with their intimate intermingling of violin and piano lines. Both Joachim and Brahms (to whom Joachim had introduced the Schumanns later in 1853) were enthusiastic about the Romances, as was King George V of Hanover, no less (though on the other hand, no more). The Romances may not be startlingly innovative—that is not the composer's intention; but they speak with a very special voice.

ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810–1856) Drei Fantasiestücke, Op. 73

Robert Schumann was the first composer to use the title Fantasiestücke, writing four sets—two for solo piano and one for piano trio, as well as those for clarinet, or violin or cello, and piano, to be heard tonight. The notion of Fantasiestücke—the term adopted from one of his favorite authors, E. T. A. Hoffmann—perfectly suits Schumann's



IT'S A CELLOBRATION!

Steven Isserlis is the latest in a distinguished line of cellists to bring their resonant tones to PUC audiences. Previous performers include greats like Pablo Casals (1922), Jacqueline du Pré (1968), Mstislav Rostropovich (1963), and Yo-Yo Ma (1979).

style, his unique alchemical gift for reproducing dreams in music. The present set was composed in 1849, at a time of violent internal strife in Germany, the revolution forcing the Schumanns to flee from their home in Dresden. Typically, Schumann's reaction was to write some of his most inward-looking, poetic music. The Fantasiestücke share the conversational tenderness of Clara's Romances: only in the last movement does Schumann's exultant alter ego, his extrovert Florestan, occupy center stage, in contrast to the wistful yearning of Clara's last Romance.

VÍTĚZSLAVA KAPRÁLOVÁ (1915–1940) Ritournelle for Cello and Piano, Op. 25

The story of Kaprálová is almost beyond tragic. The daughter of a composer and pianist who had studied with, and who attained fame for his piano duo with Ludvík Kundera (father of the novelist Milan Kunderal, Kaprálová showed early promise as composer, pianist, and conductor, appearing in the latter role in London for a performance with the BBC Symphony Orchestra in 1938 of her own Military Symphony. Having met Martinů in Prague and been deeply moved by his music, she followed him to Paris in 1937, taking lessons with him and enjoying a bond that was clearly more than musical. What exactly transpired will probably never be known for sure: but in June 1939, Kaprálová wrote to her parents that she and Martinu were going to move to America together. Less than a vear later, however, she would marry the writer Jiří Mucha, having spent the hours before her wedding with Martinů. Just a few weeks after that, she started to experience severe abdominal pains. which were diagnosed as the onset of tuberculosis; she died in hospital in Montpelier, at the age of 25, on June 16th. 1940—a few days after Martinů and his wife had fled Paris and embarked on their long journey to America. Around the time that Martinů and Kaprálová seem to have fallen in love, the former was completing his wonderful opera Julietta, about a man obsessed with a woman whom he can only possess in dreams. Her husband recalled Kaprálová's last words in the hospital where she lay dying: "It is Julietta."

There were originally two "ritournelles" for cello and piano, but only one has survived, dating from May 1940, the month before her death. The style inevitably reminds us of Martinů; but there is a vigor, a confidence, a passionate élan to the music that cannot be taught—all the more extraordinary given that it is almost certainly her swan song. As Martinů was to write later: "Why had destiny given her so much energy, so many precious gifts, and yet denied her the opportunity to realize her full potential? This question, I think, will remain forever unanswered."

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ (1890–1959) Sonata for Cello and Piano No. 1

It is not surprising, given the circumstances in which it was conceived, that the first is the most unremittingly dramatic of Martinu's three cello sonatas. The work was composed in Paris in May 1939. just around the time that Martinů and Kaprálová were planning their elopement. It is fair to assume, therefore, that his inner life must have been tempestuous at this point; but Martinu's outer life was even more cataclysmic. The sonata was written shortly after his beloved homeland, Czechoslovakia, betrayed by false allies, had fallen to the Nazis. Martinů was never to see his motherland again. The menacing opening of the sonata, the desolate, funereal landscape

of the slow movement, and the desperate conflagration that ends the work: all could be interpreted as an expression of the composer's anguish at the loss of his beloved country. By the time of the premiere of the sonata, given by the French cellist Pierre Fournier and Martinu's young friend, the Czech pianist Rudolf Firkušný, in Paris on May 19th, 1940, the Nazis were approaching Paris. and Kaprálová was fast approaching death. Martinů was to recall that the concert was "a last greeting, the last ray, from a better world."

AUGUSTA HOLMÈS (1847-1903)

arr. Steven Isserlis Recitatif et Chant from La Vision de la Reine

The French composer of Irish descent Augusta Holmès is a fascinating figure in musical history, her reputation for sexual allure still enduring today. "We were all in love with her." reminisced Saint-Saëns-quite a compliment from one whose preferences naturally strayed rather towards those of his own sex. Nobody seemed to have fallen for her more avidly than her teacher César Franck, 25 years her senior. He had until then enjoyed the reputation of a thoroughly devout Catholic, much of his music reflecting this stance. After falling for Augusta's charms, he and his music seemed to be transformed: his puritanical wife was appalled by the piano quintet he wrote in the late 1870s, its almost violent sensuality shocking many listeners, as well as Saint-Saëns, its original performer and dedicatee. It was around this time that someone was heard praising Franck's mystic qualities. "Mystic?" replied one of Franck's students. "Go and ask Augusta!"

Well, perhaps there is an element of false legend in that; and the whole story has somewhat blurred our perception of Holmès as a composer in her own right. She was the first woman to have an opera premiered at the Paris Opera, in 1895—the year of publication of her scéne La Vision de la Reine. This cantata. for which Holmès wrote the words as well as the music (as was her wont). is a religious work scored for six voices those of the Queen, the narrator, four "voix divines"—plus a seventh voice. that of the minstrel, played by a solo cello, with the accompaniment being provided by harp and piano. In her opening aria, the Queen implores the Minstrel to use his sonorous bow and the ardent magic of his beautiful sounds (hall to intercede with the Immortals to protect her beloved infant son. The cello/ minstrel responds with the impassioned recitative which opens our selection: it seems to do the trick, since the four divine voices respond with a variety of blessings and wise advice, from which I have chosen two arias. The first is a paean to nature: Aime les oiseaux et les roses (actually not involving the cello in the original, but to balance the proportions of recitative and aria, I have appropriated it), the second a hymn to love, Crois en l'amour, Dieu suprême des

voluptés et des douleurs, performed in the original by one of the "voix divines" in octaves with the cello. The cantata, and this arrangement, ends with a coda of benediction. Perhaps the whole atmosphere is somewhat Victorian—but no less touching for that.

CÉSAR FRANCK (1822–1890) Sonata for Cello and Piano in A Major

And so to Franck's beloved sonata. written in 1886 as a wedding present for the great Belgian violinist Eugene Ysavë (but described as a sonata for violin or cello in the second printing, authorized by Franck). The principal material of the work all stems from the first four bars, in which the piano sounds a questioning phrase that contrasts the purity of the perfect fourth and fifth with the searching sensuality of the minor third and the minor sixth/major third. From there we are taken on a glorious journey, theme after theme sprouting from this very basic seed, through the yearning dialogue of the opening movement, the stormy eruptions of the second, the spiritual transformation of the recitative/fantasia (in which a new theme primarily composed of the pure intervals, the fourth and fifth. makes its angelic appearance), and the love duet and joyous bells of the finale. Where the piano quintet begins and ends in darkness, this sonata concludes with the ecstatic

IT'S ALL IN THE FAMILY

There are only 20 surviving Stradivarius cellos from the legendary luthier's middle period, including some of the most famous cellos in history. The "Marquis de Corberon" on which Isserlis plays made its PUC debut in 1969, in the hands of cellist Zara Nelsova. Its cousin. the "Davidov," came to visit with Yo-Yo Ma (1979), and with Jacqueline du Pré (1958) in a program that also included César Franck's cello sonata.

triumph of love and light. Behind all the undoubted sensuality of the work's passion lies a purity that elevates the work beyond mere romanticism—a purity which, in the words of the poet Camille Mauclair, "is neither dry nor severe, but loving and gentle."



This concert marks Steven Isserlis' Princeton University Concerts debut.

Acclaimed worldwide for his profound musicianship and technical mastery, British cellist Steven Isserlis enjoys a uniquely varied career as a soloist, chamber musician, educator, author, and broadcaster. He appears with the world's leading orchestras and conductors, including the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, Zurich Tonhalle, and Los Angeles Philharmonic orchestras; and gives recitals every season in major musical centers. As a chamber musician, he has curated concert series for many prestigious venues, including London's Wigmore Hall, New York City's 92nd Street Y, and the Salzburg

Festival. Unusually, he also directs chamber orchestras from the cello in classical programs.

He has a strong interest in historical performance, working with many periodinstrument orchestras and giving recitals with harpsichord and fortepiano. He is also a keen exponent of contemporary music and has premiered many new works, including John Tavener's *The Protecting Veil*, Thomas Adès' *Lieux retrouvés*, and György Kurtag's *For Steven*.

Steven's award-winning discography includes Bach's cello suites for Hyperion (Gramophone's Instrumental Album of the Yearl: Beethoven's complete works for cello and piano with Robert Levin; and the Elgar and Walton concertos with the Philharmonia Orchestra/Paavo Järvi. His latest recordings include the Brahms Double Concerto with violinist Joshua Bell and the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, and—as director and soloist—concertos by Haydn and C.P.E. Bach, with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, which was shortlisted for a Grammy Award. A special First World War-inspired disc with Connie Shih was released in 2017, including pieces performed on a travel cello which was played in the trenches.

Since 1997, Steven Isserlis has been Artistic Director of the International Musicians Seminar at Prussia Cove, Cornwall (UK). He also enjoys playing for children and has created three musical stories, with the composer Anne Dudley.

His two books for children, published by Faber & Faber, have been translated into many languages; and his latest book, a commentary on Schumann's famous *Advice for Young Musicians*, has recently been published, also by Faber & Faber.

The recipient of many awards, Steven Isserlis' honors include a CBE in recognition of his services to music, the Schumann Prize of the City of Zwickau, and the Piatigorsky Artist Award in the USA. In 2017, he was awarded the Glashütte Original Music Festival Award, the Wigmore Hall Gold Medal, and the Walter Willson Cobbett Medal for Services to Chamber Music.

He gives most of his concerts on the Marquis de Corberon (Nelsova) Stradivarius of 1726, kindly loaned to him by the Royal Academy of Music.



This concert marks Connie Shih's Princeton University Concerts debut.

The Canadian pianist Connie Shih is repeatedly considered to be one of Canada's most outstanding artists. In 1993, she was awarded the Sylva Gelber Award for most outstanding classical artist under age 30. At the age of nine, she made her orchestral debut with Mendelssohn's first piano concerto with the Seattle Symphony Orchestra. At the age of 12, she was the youngest ever protégé of György

Sebök, and then continued her studies at The Curtis Institute in Philadelphia with Claude Frank, himself a protégé of Arthur Schnabel. Later studies were undertaken with Fou Tsong in Europe.

As soloist, she has appeared extensively with orchestras throughout Canada, the United States, and Europe. In a solo recital setting, she has made countless

appearances in Canada, the United States, Iceland, England, Spain, Italy, Germany, Japan, and China. Connie has given chamber music performances with many world-renowned musicians. She appears regularly in recital with Steven Isserlis. In addition to chamber music appearances at London's Wigmore and New York City's Carnegie Halls, she performs at the prestigious Bath Music Festival, Aldeburgh, Cheltenham, Weill Hall (New York City), and at the Kronberg Festival. Her collaborations have included violinist Maxim Vengerov, violist Tabea Zimmermann, and violinist Isabelle Faust.

In 2019/20 Connie will tour North America and Europe with Steven Isserlis. In addition, she will tour Asia with violinist Joshua Bell and appear in various venues across Germany with the cellist Manuel Fischer-Dieskau with whom she recorded the first-ever CD of the Sonatas for piano and cello by Carl Reinecke and the complete Beethoven sonatas. Her CD with Steven Isserlis on the BIS label was recently released. She is on faculty at the Casalmaggiore International Festival in Italy.





Glimpses of a Remarkable History: **Princeton University Concerts** over the Past 125 Years

By Professor Emeritus Scott Burnham, © 2018

Imagine Princeton in 1894, the year Princeton Borough began governing itself as an entity fully independent from Princeton Township. And now imagine the Old Princeton Inn, a building that stood where Borough Hall stands today. At half past three on a Monday afternoon in late October, a group of music enthusiasts gathered there to enjoy a concert performance by the renowned Kneisel Quartet. They concluded with a piece of new music, namely Antonin Dvorak's most recent string quartet, the so-called "American" quartet, which the Kneisel players had premiered in Boston some months earlier and which was one of the fruits of Dvorak's extended stay in America.

That inaugural concert was organized by the "Ladies Musical Committee," founded in 1894 by Philena Fobes Fine. Mrs. Fine was a remarkable spirit who persuaded the community to rally round and underwrite this new venture, which in its early years presented about six concerts annually. She was the first in a long line of such spirits: to an extraordinary degree, the history of Princeton University Concerts is a history of determined women making wonderful things happen. The initial committee was all women, and the driving forces for supporting and managing the concert series throughout the entire history of Princeton University Concerts have been mostly women, exclusively so for the first fifty years. Mrs. William F. Magie became chair of the committee after Mrs. Fine's death in 1928 (in an interesting parallel, her husband, William F. Magie, had succeeded Mrs.

Fine's husband, Henry B. Fine, in the role of Princeton University's Dean of Faculty back in 1912). And for a fifteen-year span during the 20s and 30s, Mrs. Williamson U. Vreeland did much of the heavy lifting, organizing the concerts, choosing the artists, and managing the finances.

Had you been around in the 1920s, you would have caught the Princeton debut of violinist Fritz Kreisler in March of 1920: or heard Pablo Casals, then lauded as the world's greatest cellist, play Bach in 1922; or heard 23-year-old Jascha Heifetz play five encores after his concert on April 7, 1924; or attended the historic concert in 1925 that featured Polish pianist, composer and statesman Ignaz Paderewski in a program including Beethoven's "Waldstein" Sonata and Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody. Not to mention a steady array of orchestral performances by the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

A turning point for the Ladies Musical Committee came in 1929, marking a new and crucial stage in its relationship with Princeton University. The first move was to stabilize and augment the committee's finances. Mrs. Fine had led the concert series for over thirty years at the time of her death. During those years, she had managed to raise about \$35,000 to support the concerts. In 1929, Mrs. Jenny Hibben and others helped increase that number to about \$52,000, and the committee established a fund in Mrs. Fine's memory, stating that the monies had "been raised for the purpose of

securing for Princeton audiences better music than they could otherwise afford." The name of the committee changed to Princeton University Concerts Committee at this time as well, but its constitution insisted that "at least a majority of the members shall be women" (this wording was not altered until 1977!). In accordance with the name change, the University became increasingly involved throughout the 1930s and 40s. Nominations to the committee had forthwith to be approved by the President of Princeton University Ithe President at the time was John Grier Hibben, husband of Mrs. Jenny Hibben); the university Controller's Office soon began keeping the books; and in 1946 President Harold Dodds authorized payment for the building of a stage set that would enable the chamber concerts to move to McCarter Theater, where the orchestral concerts and showcase recitals. were already happening.

When Mrs. Magie resigned in 1944, Professor Roy Dickinson Welch took over as head of the committee. Welch was also the father of the Music Department, which began in 1934 as a subsection of the Art and Archaeology department. A dozen years later, in 1946, Music became an official university department, housed in Clio Hall. In that same year, Welch hired Mrs. Katharine (Kit) Bryan as concert manager. They had collaborated before: in 1935, Mrs. Bryan co-founded the Princeton Society of Musical Amateurs with Welch; the group still exists today.

Among the many highlights during Mrs. Magie's tenure was the historic 1937

appearance of American singer Marian Anderson, who sang four sets of arias and Lieder and then concluded with a stirring set of spirituals. Also notable were several concerts by the Trapp Family Singers in the early 1940s. Highlights of Mrs. Bryan's early years as concert manager include performances by the recently formed Bach Aria Group, founded and directed by Princeton legend William H. Scheide.

When Mrs. Bryan retired in 1964, she was replaced by Mrs. Maida Pollock, who greatly professionalized the entire operation, bringing it up to speed in ways that are still in effect today. A force of nature, Mrs. Pollock ran the Princeton University Orchestra as well, and was also very involved with the Princeton Friends of Music. Due to the greatly increased expense of hiring symphony orchestras, the concert series stopped programming orchestras in 1975 and began focusing exclusively on chamber music. In a recent interview. Pollock asserted that her most cherished goal was to get a worthy concert hall for chamber music up and running at the university, and in the 20th year of her 22-year tenure, her efforts were finally rewarded. Richardson Auditorium became the concert hall it is today in 1984, thanks to a donation from David A. Richardson '66, in memory of his father David B. Richardson '33. a lifelong enthusiast of classical music.

One of the most memorable nights of Mrs. Pollock's reign was almost a disaster. because Spanish singer Victoria de los Ángeles had to cancel at nearly the last minute. Pollock quickly obtained the services of Russian soprano Galina Vishnevskaya, who happened to be the wife of Mstislav Rostropovich; he played the piano for her in an electrifying performance.

After Mrs. Pollock retired. Nate Randall took over in 1988. Randall broadened the purview of Princeton University Concerts, introducing programs of jazz music and world music. He also oversaw the 100th anniversary season of the series. and assisted with the inauguration of the Richardson Chamber Players, along with their Founding Director, Michael Pratt.

Our current Concert Director, Marna Seltzer, came to Princeton in 2010. Recognized by Musical America in 2017 as one of their "30 Movers and Shapers." Seltzer's many audience-friendly innovations have clearly established Princeton University Concerts at the forefront of the future of classical music. These include new ways to interact with the musical artists, such as live music meditation sessions, late-night chamber jams, and "Performances Up Close" that feature onstage seating. In introducing these additional ways to get involved in music. Marna Seltzer continues to honor the original and sustaining intention of Philena Fobes Fine: that Princeton University Concerts should reflect the values of our community as a whole. As such, it enjoys pride of place as perhaps the finest ongoing town/gown affiliation in Princeton.

The history of Princeton University Concerts has been remarkably consistent for these past 125 years. Passionate, committed women (and a few men) have presented the premier musical artists of their age, from fiery 20-somethings taking the concert world by storm to larger-than-life stars who can captivate us merely by taking the stage. An exalted lineup of the world's finest string quartets has always maintained pride of place in the series, from the Kneisel Quartet in the first decades through the Budapest Quartet in the 1930s to the Takács, Brentano, and Jerusalem Quartets today. A special relationship has always endured between all these musical artists and their Princeton presenters. Back in the day, Mrs. Fine, Mrs. Magie and Mrs. Vreeland often entertained artists after the concert; as an early history

of the Concerts Committee put it: "the artists came to think of Princeton people as their friends." That holds true now more than ever, for our visiting artists regularly declare that they love playing in Richardson Auditorium, they love the way they are treated by Marna and her staff, and they love all of you, who so demonstrably value the experience of music, who take in and give back the brilliant energy of their cherished performances.

"Music offers infinite capacity for infinite self-renewal." This is what Music Department founder Roy Dickinson Welch fervently believed, and this is what Princeton University Concerts will continue to offer us, one unforgettable concert after another.

SUPPORT US

Supporting Princeton University Concerts is critical to our future. Ticket sales cover less than half of the cost of presenting the very best in world-class music. Remaining funds come, in part, from our generous endowment, left to PUC by the Ladies' Musical Committee in 1929. We remain eternally grateful for the support of the Philena Fobes Fine Memorial Fund and the Jesse Peabody Frothingham Fund.

Other support comes from donors like you. We are grateful to the individuals whose support at all levels ensures that the musical performance remains a vital part of Princeton, the community, and the region.

If you wish to make a donation to Princeton University Concerts, please call us at 609-258-2800, visit princetonuniversityconcerts.org, or send a check payable to Princeton University Concerts to: Princeton University Concerts, Woolworth Center, Princeton, NJ 08544.

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