



Sheku Kanneh-Mason Isata Kanneh-Mason

Sheku Kanneh-Mason / *Cello*

Isata Kanneh-Mason / *Piano*

Tuesday Evening, December 10, 2019 at 7:30

Rackham Auditorium

Ann Arbor

This evening's performance is supported by the Helmut F. and Candis J. Stern Endowment Fund.

Media partnership provided by WRCJ 90.9 FM, WGTE 91.3 FM, and *Between The Lines*.

Special thanks to Pamela Ruiter-Feenstra, visiting university carillonist, for coordinating this evening's pre-concert music on the Charles Baird Carillon.

Sheku and Isata Kanneh-Mason appear by arrangement with IMG Artists.

In consideration of the artists and the audience, please refrain from the use of electronic devices during the performance.

The photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.

PROGRAM

Ludwig van Beethoven

12 Variations in F Major on “Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen” from Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte*, Op. 66

Theme: Allegretto

Variation 1

Variation 2

Variation 3

Variation 4

Variation 5

Variation 6

Variation 7

Variation 8

Variation 9

Variation 10: Adagio

Variation 11: Poco adagio quasi andante

Variation 12: Allegro

Witold Lutosławski

Grave for Cello and Piano

Samuel Barber

Sonata for Cello and Piano in c minor, Op. 6

Allegro ma non troppo

Adagio — Presto — di nuovo Adagio

Allegro appassionato

Intermission

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Sonata for Cello and Piano in g minor, Op. 19

Lento — Allegro moderato

Allegro scherzando

Andante

Allegro mosso

12 VARIATIONS IN F MAJOR ON “EIN MÄDCHEN ODER WEIBCHEN” FROM MOZART’S DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE, OP. 66 (1798)

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born December 15, 1770 in Bonn, Germany

Died March 26, 1827 in Vienna

UMS premiere: Cellist Mstislav Rostropovich with pianist Alexander Dedukhin;
January 1972 in Hill Auditorium.

Snapshots of History...In 1798:

- The Cherokee nation signs a treaty with the US allowing free passage through Cherokee lands in Tennessee through the Cumberland Gap through the Appalachian Mountains from Virginia into Kentucky
- The US Department of the Navy is established as a cabinet-level department
- Edward Jenner publishes his work on the smallpox vaccination

The Magic Flute was Beethoven’s favorite Mozart opera. The victory of good over evil and the idea that love conquered all obstacles were the underlying themes of his own opera *Fidelio* as well.

Beethoven wrote variations on two numbers from *The Magic Flute*. The first set, based on Papageno’s Act II aria, may well have been written during the Berlin visit (all we know for sure is that it was published in 1798); the other, after Pamina and Papageno’s Act I duet, came a few years later.

In “Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen” (A Girl or Young Woman), Papageno, the bird catcher who is Prince Tamino’s sidekick, sings about the perfect love he wishes to find, while playing his cherished instrument, the magic chimes he received from the Three Ladies to protect him on his journey.

Variation sets in the classical era had some fairly well-established rules,

exemplified by Mozart’s many works in this genre. The theme, presented initially in its original form, had to receive more and more ornamental embellishments and to undergo various character transformations. A variation in the minor mode was *de rigueur*, as was a slow variation in penultimate position and a final variation in a somewhat extended form and in a new meter. In Op. 66, Beethoven respected these conventions in general, but there is not one but two (consecutive) variations in the minor mode — a sign indicating the advent of Romanticism. In the final variation the theme is transformed into a *polacca*, a version of the polonaise that was very popular at the time. Unexpectedly, Beethoven modulates into an entirely new key shortly before the end — a typical Beethovenian touch.

GRAVE FOR CELLO AND PIANO (1981)

Witold Lutosławski

Born January 25, 1913 in Warsaw, Poland

Died February 7, 1994 in Warsaw

UMS premiere: This piece has never been performed on a UMS recital.

Snapshots of History...In 1981:

- Sportscaster Ernie Harwell is inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame
- The first cases of AIDS are recognized
- US President Ronald Reagan nominates the first woman, Sandra Day O'Connor, to the US Supreme Court

When Witold Lutosławski died 25 years ago, there was general consensus in the musical world that one of the greatest contemporary composers had passed away. Lutosławski, who had started from a folk-based neoclassicism, eventually assumed a leading role in the international avant-garde and, in the works of the 1980s and 1990s, achieved a new kind of classicism that was expressive and personal without being conservative in the least. As Lutosławski said in his frequently quoted *ars poetica*:

I would like to find people who in the depths of their souls feel the same way as I do...I regard creative activity as a kind of soul-fishing, and the "catch" is the best medicine for loneliness, that most human of sufferings.

Grave, a brief work for cello and piano, commemorates the musicologist Stefan Jarociński (1912–80), a close friend of Lutosławski's since high school who had written an important book on Lutosławski's music. Jarociński's other

major area of research — and a lifelong passion — was the music of Claude Debussy, and therefore Lutosławski (who counted the French master among his important influences) began his piece by quoting the first four notes of *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Lutosławski made this simple motif (D–A–G–A) undergo a true "metamorphosis" as the note durations become shorter and shorter, resulting in what sounds like a gradual *accelerando*. There are a number of references to another *in memoriam* piece Lutosławski had written more than 20 years earlier: his orchestral *Funeral Music* in memory of Béla Bartók. The music becomes more and more intense, but at the end — following a powerful climax — it returns to its slower pace as the four-note motif is repeated in its original form.

Grave was first performed in Warsaw in April 1981, by cellist Roman Jabłoński and pianist Krystyna Borucińska. The following year, Lutosławski prepared a new version for cello and string orchestra, which was premiered in Paris with Misha Maisky as the soloist.

Photo (next spread): Sheku Kanneh-Mason; photographer: Jake Turney.





SONATA FOR CELLO AND PIANO IN C MINOR, OP. 6 (1932)

Samuel Barber

Born March 9, 1910 in West Chester, Pennsylvania

Died January 23, 1981 in New York, New York

UMS premiere: This piece has never been performed on a UMS recital.

Snapshots of History...In 1932:

- The Ford Hunger March takes place by unemployed auto workers in Detroit
- Hattie W. Caraway becomes the first woman elected to the US Senate
- Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* is published in London

Samuel Barber's Cello Sonata — perhaps the first major cello sonata written by an American — shows the young composer, technically still a student at Curtis, in full command of his creative powers. He began work on the Sonata during a summer vacation spent with the family of his partner Gian-Carlo Menotti in Italy, and finished it after his return to the US. His school friend, the cellist Orlando Cole, was actively involved in the composition process, as Barber showed him his work-in-progress on a weekly basis, and benefited from Cole's comments. The Sonata was first performed in 1933 by Barber's school friend Orlando Cole, with the composer at the piano.

The cello sonatas of Brahms — especially the second one, in F Major — were undoubtedly a major influence on the young Barber, who spoke the language of late Romanticism like his mother tongue. His melodies have a sweep and his harmonies a cogency that ensured the work's success with performers and audiences alike. After an opening "Allegro ma non troppo" of uncommon emotional charge, we

hear an "Adagio" which incorporates a scherzo movement — a procedure for which Brahms's Violin Sonata in A Major, Op. 100, among others, may have provided a model. (The manuscript shows that Barber wrote the central "Presto" part first, and the framing "Adagios" were inserted later.) For all the obvious Brahms influences, Barber introduces some rather intricate rhythmic shifts in the scherzo section that Brahms, although an innovator in rhythmic matters himself, never would have used. The last movement is marked "Allegro appassionato," and it fully lives up to its name.

SONATA FOR CELLO AND PIANO IN G MINOR, OP. 19 (1901)

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Born April 1, 1873 in Semyonovo, Russia

Died March 28, 1943 in Beverly Hills, California

UMS premiere: Cellist Zara Nelsova with pianist Grant Johannesen; July 1967 in Rackham Auditorium.

Snapshots of History...In 1901:

- New York becomes the first US state to require automobile license plates
- The first Nobel Prize ceremony is held in Stockholm
- The Michigan Wolverines play their first season under Fielding H. Yost, compiling a perfect 11-0 record

Rachmaninoff's Cello Sonata shows the 28-year-old composer in full command of his creative powers. Written the same year as the Second Piano Concerto, it contains some echoes of that ever-popular work. The sonata was written for cellist Anatoly Brandukov, who had already been the dedicatee of two early cello pieces by Rachmaninoff.

The four-movement work opens with a dreamy slow introduction that segues into an "Allegro" dominated by a pair of sweeping melodies in which both instruments are made to sing in an almost operatic way. The entire movement displays an uncommon level of emotional intensity. The second movement is an "Allegro scherzando," but there is something darkly ominous about the character of the music. This mysteriously menacing quality is only temporarily relieved by the lyrical melodies introduced by way of contrast. An intimate nocturne follows as the third movement — a "love duet" of sorts between the piano and the cello. For the most part soft and introspective, this delicate

"Andante" has only a few more emphatic moments.

Rachmaninoff saved his most dynamic and energetic music for the fourth-movement "Allegro mosso," where the tonality changes from g minor to G Major. He also saved one of his most memorable melodies for this grand closing statement, in which tender passages alternate effectively with moments of great dramatic power.

Program notes by Peter Laki.

ARTISTS

Sheku Kanneh-Mason (*cello*), one of the brightest young stars on the classical music scene, became a household name worldwide in May 2018 after performing at the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex at Windsor Castle. His performance was greeted with universal excitement after being watched by nearly two billion people globally.

The winner of the 2016 BBC Young Musician competition, Mr. Kanneh-Mason is already in great demand from major orchestras and concert halls worldwide. In January 2018, his debut recording for Decca Classics, *Inspiration*, was released, featuring the Shostakovich Cello Concerto No. 1 with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla. The phenomenal success of the album propelled him to a debut spot at No. 18 in the official UK album charts, and No. 1 in the classical chart. Alongside short works by Shostakovich, Offenbach, Casals, and Saint-Saëns, his own arrangement of Bob Marley's *No Woman No Cry* was also featured on the album, and went viral on social media, clocking one-million streams in its first month on Spotify alone. In June 2018, he received the "Male Artist of the Year" and the Critics' Choice awards at the re-launched Classic BRIT Awards, and in July 2018 became the first artist to receive the new BRIT Certified Breakthrough Award, having sold over 30,000 copies of his debut album in the UK and surpassing 100,000 album sales worldwide.

Mr. Kanneh-Mason has already performed with a number of the major UK orchestras and made debuts last season with the Seattle Symphony, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Netherlands Chamber Orchestra at the Concertgebouw, the Atlanta Symphony,

and the Japan Philharmonic, as well as returning to the BBC Symphony Orchestra to perform the Elgar Concerto in his hometown of Nottingham.

This season, he opened the London Philharmonic season and makes debuts with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. He also makes his debut in a number of major German cities performing Elgar with the CBSO. In 2017, he made his BBC Proms debut at the Royal Albert Hall as soloist with the Chineke! Orchestra, an ensemble with which he enjoys a special relationship, having taken part in their debut concert at the Royal Festival Hall in 2015 and returning as soloist to perform the Haydn Concerto in September 2016

Mr. Kanneh-Mason is currently a full-time ABRSM Scholarship student at the Royal Academy of Music, studying with Hannah Roberts. He began learning the cello at the age of six with Sarah Huson-Whyte and then studied with Ben Davies at the Junior Department of the Royal Academy of Music where he held the ABRSM Junior Scholarship. He has received master class tuition from Guy Johnston, Robert Max, Alexander Baillie, Steven Doane, Rafael Wallfisch, Jo Cole, Melissa Phelps, and Julian Lloyd Webber, and in July 2017, participated in the Verbier Festival Academy in master classes with Frans Helmerson and Miklos Perenyi. A keen chamber musician, he performs with his sister Isata and brother Braimah as a member of the Kanneh-Mason Trio. He plays an Antonius and Hieronymus Amati cello c.1610, kindly on loan from a private collection.

Isata Kanneh-Mason's (*piano*) debut album *Romance* drew popular and critical acclaim, entering the UK classical charts at No. 1 when it was released in July 2019 and leading *Gramophone* magazine to extol the recording as "one of the most charming and engaging debuts" and Classic FM to praise her as "a player of considerable talent." Ms. Kanneh-Mason recorded the all-Clara Schumann disc for Decca Classics as an homage to the composer and pianist in the year of what would have been her 200th birthday, selecting works from across her compositional output including solo piano pieces, a sonata, chamber music with violinist Elena Urioste, transcriptions of two of her husband Robert's songs, and the piano concerto, which she recorded with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and conductor Holly Mathieson.

While continuing her postgraduate studies with Carole Presland as a Gwendolyn Reiche scholar at London's Royal Academy of Music, Ms. Kanneh-Mason has embarked on a successful and increasingly busy concert career as a solo artist, with concerto appearances, solo recitals, and chamber concerts throughout the UK and abroad, including a return to King's Place in solo recital, and a debut with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall. She also continues to perform with her siblings, including regular duo recitals with her brother, cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason. Highlights this season include a tour of Italy, appearances at the Edinburgh Festival, Wigmore Hall, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Théâtre des Champs Elysées, Rheingau Festival, and an extensive 10-city North American tour, including their debut recital at New York's

Carnegie Hall and a return to the Vancouver Recital Society. She has also performed in the Portland Piano Series in Oregon; the Barbican Centre's Sound Unbound festival; The Color of Music Festival in South Carolina; at the Edinburgh, Cheltenham, and Bath festivals; the Snape Proms; the Musikfestspiele Saar; and in venues from Antigua and the Cayman Islands to Perth.

Ms. Kanneh-Mason reached her category final in the 2014 BBC Young Musician competition, winning the Walter Todds Bursary for the most promising musician. She has since performed several times on television and radio, including on BBC Radio 3 *In Tune*, the *South Bank Sky Arts Awards*, *The Andrew Marr Show*, the Radio 3 *RPS Awards*, *BBC2 Proms Extra*, Radio 4 *Front Row* and *Woman's Hour*, Al Jazeera TV, *BBC World Service*, Channel 4, *The One Show*, *ITV Born To Shine*, *BBC2 Classroom Heroes*, and a feature for *CBS Sunday Morning*. She made her debut as a television presenter for the coverage of the 2019 BBC Proms.

She previously completed her undergraduate degree at the Royal Academy of Music as an Elton John scholar, and performed with Sir Elton in 2013 in Los Angeles. She is also grateful for support from the Nottingham Soroptimist Trust, Mr. and Mrs. John Bryden, Frank White, and Awards for Young Musicians.

UMS welcomes Sheku Kanneh-Mason and Isata Kanneh-Mason as they make their UMS debuts this evening.

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THIS EVENING'S PERFORMANCE**

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MAY WE ALSO RECOMMEND...

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| 1/25 | Minnesota Orchestra |
| 3/22 | New York Philharmonic String Quartet |
| 4/23 | Chineke! Orchestra with Sheku-Kanneh Mason |

Tickets available at www.ums.org.

ON THE EDUCATION HORIZON...

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| 1/16 | No Safety Net Keynote: In Conversation with Oskar Eustis
(Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty Street, 5:10 pm) |
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Educational events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.