

## 2023–2024

Friday, April 12, at 8:00

**Yo-Yo Ma** Cello

**Kathryn Stott** Piano

**Fauré** *Berceuse*, Op. 16

**Dvořák** "Songs My Mother Taught Me," from *Gypsy Songs*, Op. 55

**Assad** *Menino*

**Boulanger** *Cantique*

**Fauré** *Papillon*, Op. 77

*These pieces will be performed together as a set.*

**Shostakovich** Cello Sonata in D minor, Op. 40

I. Allegro non troppo

II. Allegro

III. Largo

IV. Allegro

### Intermission

**Pärt** *Spiegel im Spiegel*

**Franck/transcr. Delsart** Violin Sonata in A major, transcribed for cello and piano

I. Allegretto ben moderato

II. Allegro

III. Recitativo-Fantasia: Ben moderato

IV. Allegretto poco mosso

This program runs approximately 2 hours.

This concert is sponsored by **Gail Ehrlich in memory of George E. Ehrlich.**

Philadelphia Orchestra concerts are broadcast on WRTI 90.1 FM on Sunday afternoons at 1 PM and are repeated on Monday evenings at 7 PM on WRTI HD 2. Visit [www.wrti.org](http://www.wrti.org) to listen live or for more details.

# Soloist



Cellist **Yo-Yo Ma**'s multi-faceted career is testament to his belief in culture's power to generate trust and understanding. Whether performing new or familiar works from the cello repertoire, bringing communities together to explore culture's role in society, or engaging unexpected musical forms, he strives to foster connections that stimulate the imagination and reinforce our humanity.

Most recently, Mr. Ma began *Our Common Nature*, a cultural journey to celebrate the ways that nature can reunite us in pursuit of a shared future. *Our Common Nature* follows the Bach Project, a 36-community, six-continent tour of Johann Sebastian Bach's cello suites paired with local cultural programming. Both endeavors reflect his lifelong commitment to stretching the boundaries of genre and tradition to understand how music helps us to imagine and build a stronger society. Mr. Ma's many roles include United Nations Messenger of Peace; the first artist ever appointed to the World Economic Forum's board of trustees; member of the board of Nia Tero, the United States-based nonprofit working in solidarity with Indigenous peoples and movements worldwide; and founder of the global music collective Silkroad. His discography of more than 120 albums (including 19 GRAMMY Award winners) ranges from iconic renditions of the Western classical canon to recordings that defy categorization, such as *Hush* with Bobby McFerrin and *The Goat Rodeo Sessions* with Stuart Duncan, Edgar Meyer, and Chris Thile. Recent releases include *Six Evolutions*, Mr. Ma's third recording of Bach's cello suites, and *Songs of Comfort and Hope*, created and recorded with pianist Kathryn Stott in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. His latest album, *Beethoven for Three: Symphony No. 4 and Op. 97 "Archduke,"* is the third in a new series of Beethoven recordings with pianist Emanuel Ax and violinist Leonidas Kavakos.

Mr. Ma was born in 1955 to Chinese parents living in Paris. He began to study the cello with his father at age four and continued his studies at the Juilliard School before pursuing a liberal arts education at Harvard University. He has received numerous awards including the Avery Fisher Prize, the National Medal of the Arts, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, Kennedy Center Honors, the Polar Music Prize, and the Birgit Nilsson Prize. He has performed for nine American presidents, most recently on the occasion of President Biden's inauguration. Mr. Ma and his wife have two children. He plays three instruments: a 2003 instrument made by Moes & Moes, a 1733 Montagnana cello from Venice, and the 1712 Davidoff Stradivarius.

# Soloist

Jacqui Ferry



**Kathryn Stott** made friends with the upright piano in her living room at age five. That was the beginning of her musical journey, which continues to this day. Her initial progress was rapid and by age eight she found herself at the Yehudi Menuhin School, a boarding school for young musicians. During her studies there, she was heavily influenced by two occasional visitors to the school: Nadia Boulanger and Vlado Perlemuter. From them, her great passion for French

music was ignited and Gabriel Fauré in particular has remained the musical love of her life. Further studies at the Royal College of Music in London led her very abruptly into the life of a professional musician via the Leeds International Piano Competition. It remains the steepest learning curve she has ever experienced. After a rollercoaster three years, she realized that she needed to re-connect with chamber music in a bid to feel more connected to other musicians and return to an important part of her musical existence since childhood.

When, quite by chance, Ms. Stott met cellist Yo-Yo Ma in 1978, it turned out to be one of the most fortuitous moments of her life. Since 1985 they have enjoyed a collaboration that has taken them to many parts of the world and led to musical adventures with musicians who share much from their own traditions. She considers these collaborators intrepid musical explorers on their own individual paths but with an incredible bond that unites them on the creative highway.

Ms. Stott enjoys the current creative challenge of bringing many musicians together once a year in her role as artistic director of the Australian Festival of Chamber Music. Her love of curating and directing began in 1995 and since then she has brought to life many of her ideas in events lasting from long weekends to two weeks. She continues to push her capacity for exploring music she knows nothing about and loves bringing together unusual combinations whenever possible. Career highlights range from performing at the Last Night of the Proms for millions around the world to lighting up 20 small faces in an inner-city school while they jumped up and down to energetic piano music. She is passionate about working with young musicians and teaches at the Academy of Music in Oslo. She has also had some truly exciting music written for her and enjoyed a particularly close collaboration with composer Graham Fitkin. She considers it an unbelievable privilege to be immersed in a language that has no boundaries and has allowed her to share musical stories on a global scale. Her journey has also included trekking in Nepal, Costa Rica, and Bhutan, and walking her spaniel, Archie, on the Yorkshire Moors.

# The Music

Dear Friends,

Music is about connection and exploration, and Kathy Stott has been my constant partner in both for many decades, sustaining me as an artist and as a human being. Among Kathy's many gifts is her ability to craft a concert program that brings performers and audience on a shared journey, creating the unbroken circle of content, communication, and reception that can turn the concert hall into a communal space, at once sacred and secular.

It is a special honor to share this space with you tonight—this is a program of particular significance: Kathy will retire from her extraordinary career as a performer at the end of this year, and she designed this program knowing it would likely be the last we would perform together.

I hope you will listen to tonight's concert with this in mind, hearing in its whole a celebration of the time we have spent together, and in each piece a glimpse of the explorations we have shared.

Kathy and I believe that music lives through relationships: among performers, between students and teachers, across generations. The opening suite is testament to this, to the fact that we musicians stand on the shoulders of those who came before us, and that we can only hope that ours will sustain those who come after.

My path and Kathy's intersect through one teacher, Nadia Boulanger. Nadia taught Kathy in her early years at the Menuhin School, south of London, and Nadia's student, Luise Vosgerchian, was my professor in college. Professor Vosgerchian liberated me from being a neurotic instrumentalist tethered to perfection and taught me how to approach music with perspective, with humanity. It feels right that Nadia Boulanger's *Cantique*—a song of praise—arrives two-thirds of the way through the suite, at its golden mean. *Cantique* anchors an opening that contains our shared musical world, from Dvořák's own homage to the transmission of music across the generations to the creation of Sérgio Assad, one of the many friends Kathy and I met in our immersion in the music of Brazil. It is a microcosm fittingly framed by the composer who has been with Kathy since the very beginning, Gabriel Fauré, friend and mentor to Nadia Boulanger!

The three pieces that follow the opening suite contain worlds of meaning for us. In the Shostakovich, we hear the pursuit of truth, against all odds; in Arvo Pärt's *Spiegel im Spiegel*, simplicity and complexity coexist to create a portrait of the universe; and in César Franck's Sonata, composed as a wedding gift for the violinist Eugène Ysaÿe, we are given the immortal gift of love. All three are, for us, reminders of our humanity, as needed today as ever.

When I reflect on my decades of collaboration with Kathy, I realize that they have been so sustaining in part because she is fiercely grounded, yet always open to receiving the world as it is. This program reflects this, her clarity, her curiosity, and her boundless love of music.

I want to leave you with the opening lyrics of Nadia Boulanger's *Cantique*. They are words that you won't hear in our performance, lines from a poem by the Belgian poet Maurice Maeterlinck:

<i>A toute âme qui pleure</i>	To every crying soul,
<i>A tout péché qui passe</i>	To each passing sin,
<i>J'ouvre aux seins des étoiles</i>	I open to the bosom of the stars
<i>Mes mains pleins de grâces</i>	my hands full of grace

I write this note with the deepest affection and greatest admiration, trying to reconcile a spirit of huge celebration with real sadness and, above all, gratitude.

—Yo-Yo Ma

# The Music

## ***Berceuse and Papillon***

### **Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)**

Fauré was such a dashing figure in 19th-century Parisian society that he even makes an appearance in Marcel Proust's *À la Recherche du temps perdu*—or at least many believe that the author's fictional composer, Vinteuil, was modeled after him. He was a social animal: When Saint-Saëns introduced Fauré to mezzo-soprano Pauline Viardot in 1872, the younger composer was drawn to the singer's lively musical salon. He dedicated his First Violin Sonata to Pauline's son, Paul, and it became the first in a series of chamber works that would include sonatas, quartets, quintets, and shorter works such as the *Berceuse* for violin (1879) and the *Élégie* (1880) and *Papillon* (1885) for cello.

The beguiling *Berceuse* drew the attention of publisher Julien Hamelle, who would become Fauré's advocate and publisher for more than two decades. This "cradle-song" places a loving lullaby over a rocking-figure in the piano. After the success of the *Berceuse* and the *Élégie*, Hamelle solicited another sentimental piece for cello, and the result was the straightforward *Papillon*.

## **"Songs My Mother Taught Me," from Gypsy Songs**

### **Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)**

Romani or Gypsy music was ever-present in Central and Eastern Europe during the 19th century, and composers often tried to emulate its infectious rhythms and melodies. Antonín Dvořák had already delved into several types of folkloric and national styles by 1880, as seen in works as his Slavonic Dances. For the Gypsy Songs, written for the Viennese operatic tenor Gustav Walter, he drew inspiration from Adolf Heyduk's poetry, which depicts a somewhat romanticized vision of the allegedly carefree life of the Romani people. Dvořák manages to capture something subtler: not just the Romani community's *joie de vivre* but also its yearning and sadness.

"Songs My Mother Taught Me," the fourth of the set, melds Gypsy and Bohemian styles. Its darkly nostalgic text might help set the mood for this evening's instrumental version: "When my old mother taught me to sing, she was often moved to tears. And now I, too, am crying; tears burn my brown cheeks as I teach Gypsy children to play and sing!"

## **Menino**

### **Sérgio Assad (b. 1952)**

Brazilian guitarist-composer Sérgio Assad has focused much of his career on building a repertoire for two guitars, which he and his brother, Odair, have performed around the world. He has written some 50 original compositions and has made more than 300 arrangements of folk tunes and of music ranging from Bach to Piazzolla, Debussy to Ginastera. Friendships with such musicians as

Gidon Kremer, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, Paquito D'Rivera, and Yo-Yo Ma have yielded a rich array of works and collaborative efforts.

Assad learned folk music from his father in São Paulo and later studied guitar at the Escola Nacional de Música in Rio. *Menino* was created in 2003: It formed part of the Assad Brothers' tour with Ma and appeared on the celebrated *Obrigado Brazil* album. "It's a song about a child," Assad says, "the child that we all have inside of us." *Menino* reflects childhood's tender joys and, in the scurrying central section, its restless playfulness.

## **Cantique**

### **Nadia Boulanger (1887–1979)**

At age nine Nadia Boulanger entered the Paris Conservatory, where among her teachers was Gabriel Fauré. She tried repeatedly to earn the Prix de Rome, but in the end it was her sister, Lili, who became the first woman to win the coveted fellowship. Boulanger grew into a gifted pianist, a disarmingly ingenious composer, and one of the most influential teachers of the 20th century. Among her students of harmony, counterpoint, and composition were Aaron Copland, Elliott Carter, Astor Piazzolla, Philip Glass, Quincy Jones, and conductors such as Daniel Barenboim and John Eliot Gardiner.

Her own music, which often suggests the influence of Debussy, is marked by transparent textures, chromatic harmonies, and meticulous counterpoint. *Cantique* (1909) sets a poem by Maurice Maeterlinck, the librettist of Debussy's *Pelléas and Mélisande*. In the original text, the legendary nun Beatrice sings of a God who has the power to remove all suffering and pain from the pious. Boulanger's is a hymn-like setting in which a plaintive cello is placed against subtly shifting piano harmonies.

## **Cello Sonata**

### **Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–75)**

The Cello Sonata that 27-year-old Dmitri Shostakovich composed in the summer of 1934 was perhaps less daring than the opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, which had received its premiere earlier that year. But it would be simplistic to call it conservative. It does contain an unusual sharpness of focus and clarity of design that some have attributed to the composer's state of mind.

He was deeply in love, and with a woman who was not his wife. (He had married Nina Varzar just two years earlier.) "There is nothing in you which fails to send a wave of joy and fierce passion through me every time I think of you," he wrote to Yelena Konstaninovskaya, a young interpreter he had met at a Leningrad festival. "Lyalya, I love you so ... as nobody ever loved before. My love, my gold, my dearest." The composer would reunite with Nina in 1936, when she became pregnant with their first child.

He made quick work of the Sonata and performed it that December with the dedicatee, Viktor Kubatsky. The Allegro non troppo demonstrates a mastery

of structure, while the Allegro is breathless without being frenetic. The Largo contains one of Shostakovich's most gorgeously long-breathed melodies, and the brief Allegro is a sharp-witted 100-meter dash.

### ***Spiegel im Spiegel***

#### **Arvo Pärt (b. 1935)**

Estonian composer Arvo Pärt became a pioneer of a new musical movement in the 1980s and '90s, one that joined minimalism with a sort of a reflective spiritual outlook. His music dazzled musicians and audiences alike with its textural and melodic simplicity and its transfixing aural beauty.

*Spiegel im Spiegel* (1978) was one of the last pieces Pärt composed before leaving what was then still the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic. He would later settle in Vienna and then in Berlin. He has referred to his music as reflecting a "tintinnabuli" style, as in the sound of peeling bells—an effect borne out in this 10-minute piece. The title refers to the concept of a mirror seen in another mirror, and the corridor of visual infinity that results.

### **Violin Sonata (transcribed for cello and piano by Jules Delsart)**

#### **César Franck (1822–90)**

One of Franck's strongest supporters was the violinist-composer Eugène Ysaÿe, whose advocacy for new French music helped spur the careers not just of Franck himself but of Debussy, Chausson, and others. Franck admired Ysaÿe so much that, when the violinist wed Louise Bourdeau in 1886, he presented him with the most extraordinary of wedding gifts: a new violin sonata. Ysaÿe was so moved by the gesture that he reportedly gave an impromptu performance of the piece for his wedding guests, joined by the pianist Léontine Bordes-Pène. He continued to champion the work. "Nothing in the world could have done me greater honor or given me more pleasure than this gift," Ysaÿe later said of the Sonata. "But it is not for me alone, it is for the whole world. ... In interpreting it, I shall do my very best as an artist and admirer of César Franck, whose genius has not been adequately recognized up to now."

The opening movement (Allegretto ben moderato) is a miracle of poise and calm that establishes the sonata's primary thematic material—music that is used throughout the piece in a cyclical manner that looks to Berlioz and Liszt. The second movement (Allegro) is a Schumannesque toccata, mitigated with moments of tender respite. An impassioned vocalise in the violin forms the heart of the Recitativo-Fantasia movement. The Allegretto poco mosso gives in to the joy and optimism of the occasion.

—Paul J. Horsley