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**JONATHAN AND SARAH YEN**

*presents*

**YO-YO MA, CELLO**  
**KATHRYN STOTT, PIANO**

This evening marks Yo-Yo Ma's eleventh and Kathryn Stott's third appearance with the Harriman-Jewell Series.

**The Muriel McBrien Kauffman Family Foundation  
is the sponsor of our 58th Season.**

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7:00 P.M., FRIDAY, MARCH 31, 2023

FOLLY THEATER

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

Yo-Yo Ma, cello and Kathryn Stott, piano

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# YO-YO MA, CELLO

## KATHRYN STOTT, PIANO

*{Pieces grouped together are to be performed without pause.}*

Song Without Words, Op. 109

*Scarborough Fair*

*Shenandoah*

*Was it a Dream?*, Op. 37 No. 4

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847)

TRADITIONAL, Arr. STEPHEN HOUGH

CAROLINE SHAW (b. 1982)

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865–1957)

*From Jewish Life*

I. Prayer

II. Supplication

III. Jewish Song

ERNEST BLOCH (1880–1959)

*4 Romantic Pieces*

I. Allegro moderato

II. Allegro maestoso

III. Allegro appassionato

IV. Larghetto

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (1841–1904)

INTERMISSION

*Dervish*

ERROLLYN WALLEN (b. 1958)

*Cristal*

CESAR CAMARGO MARIANO (b. 1943), Arr. JORGE CALANDRELLI

*Gracias a la vida*

VIOLETA PARRA (1917–1967), Arr. CALANDRELLI

*Libertango*

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA (1921–1992), Arr. KATHRYN STOTT

*Soledad*

PIAZZOLLA

*Le Grand Tango*

PIAZZOLLA

## PROGRAM NOTES

### Felix Mendelssohn *Song Without Words*, Op. 109

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847) straddled both the Classical and Romantic eras. His symphonies, sonatas, and string quartets are examples of classical perfection, while the Hebrides Overture, Walpurgisnacht, and the *Songs without Words* are full of the fantastical spirit of the Romantic era.

Mendelssohn came up with the rather generic title *Song Without Words* because he did not want the title to be too specific. He wanted the listener to bring his or her own meaning to the piece. Mendelssohn wrote many *Songs Without Words*, but Op. 109, composed for cello and piano, is one of his most lyrical and dreamy.

### Traditional, arranged by Stephen Hough *Scarborough Fair*

"O, where are you going?" "To Scarborough fair,"  
"Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme ..."

These lines from a traditional English ballad were made famous by Simon and Garfunkel in the 1960s. In *Scarborough Fair*, a lover asks his beloved to perform impossible tasks for him, such as making a shirt without needlework and washing it in a dry well. The ballad seems to be related to the more menacing *The Elfin Knight*, a Scottish ballad in which an elf demands impossible tasks from a young woman in exchange for not abducting her.

### Traditional, arranged by Caroline Shaw *Shenandoah*

The folk song *Shenandoah* traces its origins to the fur traders who would travel down the Missouri river. The song tells of a trader's love for the daughter of Shenandoah (1710–1816), chief of the Oneida Iroquois. By the mid-1880s, the song made its way down the Mississippi river and became a popular sea shanty. Caroline Shaw, who arranged this setting, won a Pulitzer Prize in 2013 for *Partita for 8 Voices*, an a cappella work for choir. In 2022, she won the Grammy for Best Contemporary Classical Composition for *Narrow Sea*, a setting of Sacred Harp hymns.

### Jean Sibelius *Was it a Dream?*, Op. 37 No. 4

While the symphonies and tone poems of Jean Sibelius (1865–1957) are some of the most popular works of classical music, his songs are less well-known, even though they are lovely and touching. *Was it a Dream?* is a bittersweet remembrance of an old love. Sibelius dedicated it to the soprano Ida Ekman, telling her "Here you have my most beautiful song."

### Ernest Bloch *From Jewish Life: Prayer, Supplication, and Jewish Song*

The Swiss-born American composer Ernest Bloch (1880–1959) wrote very appealing music, much of it inspired by Jewish culture. *From Jewish Life* are three movements Bloch wrote for the cellist Hans Kindler. *Prayer* evokes a cantor in an Ashkenazi synagogue, while *Supplication* perfectly captures the spirit of a plaintive psalm. The final movement, *Jewish Song*, has the distinctive flavor of an Eastern European Jewish melody.

{Continued on the next page}

**Antonín Dvořák**  
*Four Romantic Pieces*

Czech composer Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904) wrote his *Four Romantic Pieces* for Violin and Piano in 1887. He originally composed them for string trio and called them *Miniatures*. At the time, Dvořák and his family were living in the same house as his mother-in-law. Josef Kruis, a young chemistry student who was also an amateur violinist, was a boarder in the house. Kruis and Jan Pelikán, a violinist with Prague's National Theater orchestra, would often play duos in the house. Dvořák, a violist, wrote *Miniatures* so he could join them in music-making.

Not long after he composed *Miniatures*, he arranged it for violin and piano and now called them *Romantic Pieces*. They certainly live up to the name. These lyrical movements have all the qualities that we know and love about Dvořák: the wistful nostalgia, the Czech folk rhythms, and the sunny geniality.

**Errollyn Wallen**  
*Dervish*

Errollyn Wallen (b. 1958) is a Belize-born British composer who studied dance in London and at the Dance Theatre of Harlem. She has a profound sense of movement and music, which is on display in *Dervish*. She wrote,

"In dervish dances, contrary to popular myth, there is absolutely no hedonistic wildness; the swirling skirts move from rapt and still devotion. The Sufi dance is solely for worship. I wanted to capture this atmosphere (*Dervish* proceeds from an intense, trance-like state) and also to set it beside the passion that is in speed."

**Cesar Camargo Mariano,**  
 arranged by Jorge Calandrelli  
*Cristal*

One of the great Brazilian jazz artists, pianist Cesar Camargo Mariano (b. 1943), has performed not only with his own ensembles Sambalanço and Som Três but also with some of the greatest artists of classical

music, like Yo-Yo Ma. His swinging *Cristal* is breezy Brazilian music at its best. It was featured on Ma's Grammy-winning 2003 album *Obrigado Brazil*.

**Violeta Parra, arranged by Jorge Calandrelli**  
*Gracias a la vida*

*Gracias a la vida* (*Thanks to life*) was written by Chilean composer Violeta Parra (1917–1967). Parra composed works in the genre known as *Cancion Chilena*, which emphasized social themes and elements from traditional Chilean folk music. The song is very popular in the Spanish-speaking world. Joan Baez featured it as the title track on her 1974 album *Gracias a la vida*.

**Astor Piazzolla, arranged by Kathryn Stott**  
*Libertango*

*Libertango* is by the Argentinian master of tango and bandoneon player, Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992). It was featured on the album *Soul of the Tango - The Music of Astor Piazzolla*, Yo-Yo Ma's 1999 collaboration with Argentinian composer and arranger Jorge Calandrelli, which won the Grammy for Best Classical Crossover album. Recorded by Piazzolla in 1974, *Libertango* was an early example of tango nuevo, a new genre which expanded traditional tango with other musical influences.

**Astor Piazzolla**  
*Soledad*

**Astro Piazzolla**  
*Le Grand Tango*

Piazzolla, who studied in Paris with the legendary Nadia Boulanger, brought a classical music sensibility to the world of tango. *Soledad* is a beautiful example of Piazzolla's profoundly sensitive approach. In 1982, he composed *Le Grand Tango* for the Russian cellist Mstislav Rostropovich. In this piece, Piazzolla also utilizes jazz syncopation. It's a perfect example of *nuevo tango*, fusing Argentinian dance with classical and jazz.

- Notes by Patrick Neas

## YO-YO MA, CELLO



Photo by Jason Bell

■ 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 for cello, bringing communities together to explore culture's role in society, or engaging unexpected musical forms, Yo-Yo strives to foster connections that stimulate the imagination and reinforce our humanity.

Most recently, Yo-Yo 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 J. S. Bach's cello suites paired with local cultural programming. Both endeavors reflect Yo-Yo's lifelong commitment to stretching the boundaries of genre and tradition to understand how music helps us to imagine and build a stronger society.

It was this belief that inspired the formation of *Silkroad*, the global music collective. Through his work with *Silkroad*, as well as throughout his career, Yo-Yo Ma has sought to expand the cello repertoire, premiering compositions by Osvaldo Golijov, Leon Kirchner, Zhao Lin, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Giovanni Sollima, and John Williams, among many others.

In addition to his work as a performing artist, Yo-Yo has partnered with communities and institutions around the world to develop programs that advocate for a future guided by humanity, trust, and understanding. Among his many roles, Yo-Yo is a United Nations Messenger of Peace, the first artist ever appointed to the World Economic Forum's board of trustees, and a member of the board of Nia Tero, the US-based nonprofit working in solidarity with Indigenous peoples and movements worldwide.

Yo-Yo's 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. Yo-Yo's recent releases include *Six Evolutions*, his 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. Yo-Yo's latest album, *Beethoven for Three: Symphony No. 6 and Op. 1, No. 3*, is the second in a new series of Beethoven recordings with pianist Emanuel Ax and violinist Leonidas Kavakos.

Yo-Yo was born in 1955 to Chinese parents living in Paris. He began to study the cello with his father at age four and three years later moved with his family to New York City, where he continued his cello studies at the Juilliard School before pursuing a liberal arts education at Harvard. He has received numerous awards, including the Avery Fisher Prize (1978), the National Medal of the Arts (2001), the Presidential Medal of Freedom (2010), Kennedy Center Honors (2011), the Polar Music Prize (2012), and the Birgit Nilsson Prize (2022). He has performed for nine American presidents, most recently on the occasion of President Biden's inauguration.

Yo-Yo 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.

## KATHRYN STOTT, PIANO



■ At the age of five, I made friends with the upright piano in our living room. That was the beginning of my musical journey, one which continues as you read this. It would appear that my initial progress was rapid and by the age of eight, I found myself at a boarding school for young musicians, the Yehudi Menuhin School. During my studies there, it is now clear to me that I was heavily influenced by two occasional visitors to the school; Nadia Boulanger and Vlado Perlmutter. From them, my great passion for French music was ignited and Fauré in particular has remained the musical love of my life.

Further studies at the Royal College of Music in London then led me very abruptly into the life of a professional musician via the Leeds International Piano Competition. It remains the steepest learning curve I have ever experienced. After a rollercoaster three years, I realised that I needed to re-connect with chamber music in a bid to feel more connected to other

musicians and after all, this had played an important part of my musical existence since being a child.

When, quite by chance, I met Yo-Yo Ma in 1978, it turned out to be one of the most fortuitous moments of my life. Since 1985, we have enjoyed a collaboration which has taken us to so many fascinating parts of the world and led to musical adventures with musicians who shared so much from their own traditions. I have always considered us to be intrepid musical explorers on our own individual paths but with an incredible bond that unites us on the creative highway.

I very much enjoy the challenge involved in bringing musicians together with exciting programming at its core. Most recently, I was the Artistic Director of the Australian Festival of Chamber Music and working with artists on such a huge geographical scale, was fascinating. A little closer to home, I am presently the curator of the 2023 Sheffield Chamber Music Festival, and with this come fresh creations equally exciting. My love of curating and directing began in 1995 and since then I have brought to life many of my ideas in events lasting anything from long weekends to two weeks. I continue to push my capacity for exploring music I know nothing about and love bringing together unusual combinations whenever possible.

There are too many highlights in my career to mention. Yes, it was a thrill to perform at the Last Night of the Proms to millions around the world, but equally a massive thrill to have lit up twenty small faces in an inner-city school while they jumped up and down to energetic piano music! Working with young musicians is something I feel passionate about and presently teach at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. I have also had some truly exciting music written for me and enjoyed a particularly close collaboration with composer Graham Fitkin. What an unbelievable privilege it is to be immersed in a language which has no boundaries and has allowed me to share musical stories on a global scale; that little upright piano set me on quite a path! Talking of paths – I have also been found trekking in Nepal, Costa Rica, Bhutan or walking my spaniel Archie on the Yorkshire Moors. The journey continues.