LUKA COETZEE
CELLO
JON KIMURA PARKER
PIANO

Saturday, October 31, 2026

Raven's Cry Theatre, Sechelt

Presenting sponsor:

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This concert is dedicated to the memory of Ian Munro

Canadian South African cellist **Luka Coetzee** (b. 2004) is quickly establishing herself as one of the most compelling voices in the next generation of leading classical musicians. Expressive depth, fearless musical conviction, and authenticity infuse her performances and blossoming international career. Luka earned numerous awards including First Prize at the 2023 International Paulo Cello Competition; First Prize at the 2022 Pablo Casals International Award; the Frans Helmerson Promotional Award at Kronberg Academy; and First Prize in the Johansen International Competition in Washington, DC, garnering further recognition as an international soloist.

Last season she gave solo concerto debuts in Germany, Switzerland, Finland, Czech Republic, Spain, France, Italy, US, Canada, and Mexico. This season she joins Jon Kimura Parker for performances in Mexico, the US, and Canada—including at Toronto's Koerner Hall.

Her 2020 debut recording on Naxos, *Beethoven Recomposed*, with the LGT Young Soloists, features Luka's performance of Beethoven's *A Major Cello Sonata*. The album soared to No. 1 on the Apple Music Classical Charts in over 40 countries, positioning her amongst the most widely streamed young classical musicians that year.

Luka's artistic development has been shaped through masterclasses with some of the most distinguished artists, including Steven Isserlis, Gidon Kremer, Frans Helmerson, Martti Rousi, Richard Aaron, David Geringas, Laurence Lesser, and the Calidore, Kronos, and Schumann quartets.

She started playing piano at the age of three and finished The Royal Conservatory of Music ARCT piano exam with First Class Honours. She currently studies at the Kronberg Academy in Germany with Wolfgang Emanuel Schmidt. Luka plays on a c. 1712–15 Giuseppe Guarneri 'filius Andrea' cello, with a bow by François Nicolas Voirin, both graciously provided by Canimex Inc., from Drummondville (Quebec), Canada.

Luka Coetzee is represented worldwide by SHELDON ARTISTS

Luka is a Violin Channel Artist, and an Endorsing Artist for Thomastik-Infeld strings (Vienna).

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The artists (continued)

Pianist **Jon Kimura Parker** is known for his charisma, infectious enthusiasm, and dynamic performances that celebrate the joy of musical expression. A veteran of the international stage, Parker has performed in major venues including the Berlin Philharmonie, Carnegie Hall, London's South Bank, Sydney Opera House, and Beijing Concert Hall. He currently serves as Creative Partner for the Minnesota Orchestra's Summer at Orchestra Hall, Artistic Director of the Honens International Piano Competition, Artistic Advisor for the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival, and chairs the keyboard faculty at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music.

An eclectic and collaborative artist, Parker has performed with Yo-Yo Ma, Cho-Liang Lin, Frederica von Stade, Susan Graham, and Lynn Harrell, as well as Doc Severinsen, Audra McDonald, Bobby McFerrin, and Dessa.

He co-founded the Montrose Trio and toured *Off the Score* with Police drummer Stewart Copeland, performing his own arrangements of Prokofiev, Ravel, and Stravinsky.

A Gold Medalist at the 1984 Leeds International Piano Competition, Parker studied with Edward and Keiko Parker, Lee Kum-Sing, Marek Jablonski, and Adele Marcus at Juilliard. He is an Officer of the Order of Canada and holds honorary doctorates from the University of British Columbia and The Royal Conservatory of Music. Parker, affectionately known as "Jackie," lives with his wife, violinist/violist Aloysia Friedmann. Their daughter, Sophie, is an artist.

The program

OMAR DANIEL (B. 1960)

Duo for cello and piano (2018)

Vivace

Andante

Allegro barbaro

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–97)

Cello Sonata No. 2, in F, op. 99 (1886)

Allegro vivace

Adagio affettuoso

Allegro passionato

Allegro molto

INTERMISSION

GEORGE GERSHWIN (1898–1937)

Three Preludes (c1923-6)

Allegretto ben ritmato e deciso

Andante con moto e poco rubato

Allegretto ben ritmato e deciso

CÉSAR FRANCK (1822–1890)

Sonata for violin and piano in A Major (1886)

Allegretto ben moderato

Allegro

Recitativo – Fantasia: Ben moderato

Allegretto poco mosso

The program notes

OMAR DANIEL

Duo for cello and piano (2018)

"My compositional style is based fundamentally on the concept of drama," says Toronto-based composer Omar Daniel. "It's a concept that believes that everything is linked and has cause and effect to the unfolding of time. Something might appear the same from one minute to the next—but it's not, because everything else is changing around it. Things grow and transform on an ongoing basis. I try to get that across musically, so that musical ideas are never stationary. Everything is organic. Everything is always in a process of development and affecting other things around it."

Speaking of his 2018 Duo for cello and piano, Daniel, who has been Associate Professor at the Don Wright Faculty of Music, Western University since 2000, pinpoints his aims in the piece: "Over the last decade, I have been less interested in the exploration of instrumental colour and more in clarity of counterpoint and structure. As well, architecture based on harmony rather than sonority (both on a small and large scale) is a fundamental principle in this work. I attribute this to my ongoing interest in Estonian folk music, as well as the music of Béla Bartók and Galina Ustvolskaya. But, that being true, the act of performance figures significantly into the design and inspiration for this work. For me, chamber music is one of the most intimate and profound artistic forums. Where else can you find out so much about someone (the performer) in so short a time? The rich history of music for cello and piano, the level of skill and artistry of [the performers] and the respect I have for the tradition and legacy of classical musicians was always present during the conception of this work."

JOHANNES BRAHMS

Cello Sonata No. 2, in F, Op. 99 (1886)

Twenty-one years separate the passionate F major sonata (August 1886) from the earlier, elegiac E minor sonata for the same instruments. In both, Brahms was acutely aware of the influence of Beethoven. "You do not know what it is like, hearing Beethoven's footsteps constantly behind me," he famously wrote. In the tradition of Beethoven, Brahms titled both works 'Sonata for piano and cello,' long after the convention of putting the piano first in duo sonatas went out of fashion.

The sonata plunges headlong into the bold, sweeping main theme. It is quite fragmentary and unusual for its day. "Nothing is repeated without promoting development," Arnold Schoenberg wrote a half century later—adding that many, himself included, had difficulty grasping the unusual rhythm, the syncopations and such intervals as the ninths in the fifth bar. Brahms builds this opening movement from two terse motives—the jump of a fourth and fall of a second, heard at the very opening from the cello over piano tremolos. The texture here mirrors the jagged peaks of the Swiss alps and the calmer shores of Lake Thun, in the idyllic setting where Brahms composed the work. "It is so masterly in its compression," Elisabet von Herzogenberg wrote to Brahms as one of his most trusted advisors, "so torrent-like in its progress, so terse in the development, while the extension of the first subject on its return comes as the greatest surprise."

The slow movement begins in the strikingly remote key of F-sharp, an effect that gives a distant, other-worldly feeling to the movement. This mood is enhanced by the unusual use of plucked cello strings, in both low and high registers. The third movement is a dynamic scherzo. Its rugged, demanding piano writing is often reminiscent of the more turbulent piano writing of the youthful Brahms. After the tension of these three movements, the finale offers some respite, being untroubled by weighty matters, yet substantial enough.

"In the sonata, passion rules, fiery to the point of vehemence, now defiantly challenging, now painfully lamenting," the Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick wrote, perceptively, after the first performance of this F major Sonata. "How boldly the first Allegro theme begins; how stormily the Allegro flows. It is true that the passion subsides into quiet mourning in the Adagio and fades away, reconciled in the finale. But the beating pulse of the earlier section still reverberates, and pathos remains the determining psychological characteristic of the whole."

GEORGE GERSHWIN

Three Preludes (c1923-6)

"On Saturday afternoon the musical smart set clustered at the Hotel Roosevelt to hear George Gershwin play his five new preludes for piano. It was the first public performance of these pieces, which are still in manuscript, and which are to be joined with others as yet unwritten in a series called Melting Pot. They are brief and glowing little vignettes of New York life." So ran the *New York Evening World* review of December 4, 1926. Almost two years earlier, Vanity Fair writer Carl Van Vechten had predicted that "some of Gershwin's finest inspirations have not as yet been either published or publicly performed. It is probable that the production of his twenty-four piano preludes [...] will award him a still higher rank in the army of contemporary composers."

But Gershwin's ambition to emulate Bach and Chopin with a set of 24 preludes—one in each key—was never realised. A 1924 sketchbook already hints at the plan, while another, headed Preludes, Jan. 1925, shows that his thoughts were turning to a jazz-inspired idiom. A surviving G minor fragment captures this new direction.

By the time of the 1926 New York première and a repeat performance in Boston two weeks later, Gershwin performed

The program notes (continued)

only three written-out pieces, also improvising around two or three existing pieces and playing excerpts from *Rhapsody in Blue*. The *Evening World* reported five preludes, but only three reached publication in 1927. These *Three Preludes* form a compact suite: two rhythmically charged, syncopated movements flank a slow, blue-hued middle piece built on a twelve-bar blues pattern. Gershwin described it as "a sort of blue lullaby"—a dreamy intersection of concert hall poise and a glimpse of the Twenties Harlem jazz club atmosphere.

They may be brief, but these preludes are Gershwin distilled—urbane, jazz-inflected, and unmistakably alive to the sounds of the 1920s New York he knew so well.

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CÉSAR FRANCK

Sonata for violin and piano in A Major (1886)

César or, to give him his full gloriously quintuple-barrelled forename, César-Auguste-Jean Guillaume-Hubert Franck, had his early career shaped by a combination of innate musical talent, and an overbearing father—a Walloon mine superintendent. His father exploited César's prodigious talent as a pianist, sending him and his violinist brother on well-paid concert tours at the expense of his education at the Paris Conservatoire.

His early compositions were showy piano pieces written for such tours, but aged twenty he wrote four piano trios, which secured his reputation as a composer. However, for much of his life he was forced to earn his living in Paris working as a piano teacher during the week and as a church organist at week-ends.

He was also a much-loved teacher of composition, both individually and as professor of organ at the Paris conservatoire. Most of his compositions were for organ and, less successfully, for choirs. He did not return to writing chamber music until his later years: the piano quintet in 1879, this sonata in 1886 and the string quartet in 1889. These works are of his best, and established a new era of French chamber music.

The *Violin Sonata*, often transcribed for other instruments, was written when Franck was 63, as a wedding present for the 31-year old Belgian virtuoso violinist and composer Eugène Ysaÿe. Franck presented the work to Ysaÿe on the morning of his wedding. After a hurried rehearsal, Ysaÿe performed the *Sonata* at the wedding. He gave the first public performance later that year at the Brussels Museum of Modern Painting. By the end of a long programme, the light was fading, and since the gallery authorities permitted no artificial light, the last three movements had to be played from memory in virtual darkness.

The sonata reflects Franck's frequent use of 'cyclic unity' where ideas from previous movements re-appear, perhaps modified, in later ones. The opening theme of the gentle first movement provides a foundation for the whole work. The following Allegro is more like a conventional first movement, an energetically rising start contrasting with a falling second subject that mirrors the work's opening figure. The third movement is an original Recitative and Fantasy whose opening echoes that of the first movement and whose climax introduces both a theme which will recur in the last movement and another that provides a variant on the work's opening. Much of the final movement is written as a canon on a theme which is again related to the work's opening. The two parts of the canon are initially separated by a whole bar, but later move closer to just a half bar—a touching metaphor, along with the hint of wedding bells, for Ysaÿe's wedding.

— Program note by Chris Darwin

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