Sheku and Isata Kanneh-Mason
cello and piano

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2020
The music of American composer Samuel Barber is most widely known from the use of his Adagio for Strings in the 1986 anti-war film Platoon. His songs and instrumental works, however, are equally popular in the programs of the world’s leading concert artists and ensembles. Barber’s Piano Sonata, for example, was performed more than once in the piano semifinals of the prestigious Tchaikovsky International Music Competition in Moscow earlier this year. But the enduring popularity of Barber’s music should be no surprise, given its vocally-inspired lyricism and its sympathy with the Romantic-era aesthetic that still lies at the heart of the modern concert repertoire.

Barber’s Cello Sonata was written in 1932 when the composer was still studying at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia and Brahms in particular looms large as an influence on its compositional style. Among its Brahmsian features are its high-serious tone and emotional intensity, its employment of cross-rhythms, and its luxuriant use of the rich low range of the keyboard. Among its modern features, however, are its frequent changes in meter and the angularity of many of its melodies.

The first movement opens with a series of melodic leaps in both the piano and cello, much in the manner of the surging opening of Brahms’ Cello Sonata No. 2 in F major Op. 99. A smooth songful melody soon appears in the cello as a second theme, and is then taken up by the piano, but the development section of this sonata-form movement is largely preoccupied with the melodic leaps that opened the work. Indeed, the interval of a minor 6th is a recurring motive throughout the entire movement.

Instead of writing a slow movement and a scherzo, Barber imbeds a fast-paced scherzo within his slow movement. The contrast could not be greater. The opening Adagio is slow and purposefully lyrical, with the resolution of each appoggiatura and harmonic dissonance a notable event. The Presto is a classic scherzo: fleet and lightly textured, bristling with rhythmic tricks and coy interplay between the instruments.

The finale displays Barber the neo-Romantic at full sail, plying successive waves of emotion. It opens with a passionate piano solo churning restlessly in the bass in support of a yearning right-hand melody in the mid-range. The cello when it enters is equally incandescent and the emotional range of the movement as a whole is wide in the extreme. In contrast to the often thrashing assertiveness of the keyboard texture, it also features sections of dreamy remembrance of previous movements, as well as playful episodes—all within the formal constraints of a sonata-form structure.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

BARBER: SONATA FOR CELLO AND PIANO, OP. 6

The Philharmonic Society’s 2020-21 season is made possible through the generous support of

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VIRTUAL ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

SHEKU KANNEH-MASON
CELLO

ISATA KANNEH-MASON
PIANO

PROGRAM

Sonata for Cello and Piano, Samuel BARBER
Op. 6 (1910-1981)

Allegro ma non troppo
Adagio—Presto—Adagio
Allegro appassionato
A major challenge for the performers is the coordination of the thorny cross-rhythms and lightning-fast changes in tempo that qualify this movement, like the others, as both willfully Romantic and unabashedly modern.

—D. Gíslason

SHEKU KANNEH-MASON, CELLO

The winner of the 2016 BBC Young Musician competition, Sheku Kanneh-Mason is already in great demand from major orchestras and concert halls worldwide. He 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. In June 2018, Sheku 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 more than 30,000 copies of his debut album in the UK and surpassing 100,000 album sales worldwide. In January 2020, Sheku released his second album, Elgar, featuring the Cello Concerto, which he recorded at Abbey Road Studios with Sir Simon Rattle and the London Symphony Orchestra. On its release, it reached No. 8 in the UK Official Album Chart, making Sheku the youngest classical instrumentalist and the first cellist in history to reach the UK Top 10.

Sheku has made debuts with orchestras such as the Seattle Symphony, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Netherlands Chamber Orchestra at the Concertgebouw, the Atlanta Symphony, Japan Philharmonic, BBC Symphony, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, and Baltimore Symphony orchestras. Forthcoming highlights include performances with the City of Birmingham Symphony, Toronto Symphony, BBC Scottish Symphony, and Stockholm Philharmonic orchestras.


In 2017, Sheku 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. He returned to the Proms twice more as part of the 40th anniversary of BBC Young Musician in 2018, and to perform the Elgar Concerto with the City of Birmingham Symphony and Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla in 2019. Sheku is passionate about the importance of making classical music accessible to all and is an ambassador for music education charities Music Masters and Future Talent. During the Covid-19 lockdown in spring 2020, Sheku and his siblings performed in twice-weekly livestreams from their family home in Nottingham to audiences of hundreds of thousands around the globe.

In February 2018, Sheku performed ‘Evening of Roses’ at the BAFTAS Awards show at the Royal Albert Hall. He was joined on stage by four of his six siblings, all of whom perform classical music to an exceptional standard. This was the first time any artist has been invited to perform during the ceremony two years running and followed his memorable performance of Leonard Cohen’s ‘Hallelujah’ at the 2017 BAFTAs, the subsequent recording going viral on YouTube.

In July 2019, Sheku was awarded the prestigious 2019 PPL Classical Award at the O2 Silver Clef ceremony in support of independent music therapy charity, Nordoff Robbins. In 2017, he was awarded the South Bank Sky Arts Breakthrough Award, given by the judges to the most promising young Artist across all genres, following recent winners Billie Piper and Stormzy. He has performed alongside Hollywood A-listers in ‘The Children’s Monologues’ directed by Danny Boyle at Carnegie Hall New York and has played at No. 10 Downing Street in front of an illustrious guest list for Black History Month. Sheku 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 masterclass 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 masterclasses with Frans Helmerson and Miklos Perenyi. A keen chamber musician, Sheku performs with his sister, Isata and brother, Braimah, as a member of the Kanneh-Mason Trio.

Sheku was appointed a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) in the 2020 New Year’s Honours List. He plays an Antonius and Hieronymus Amati cello c.1610, kindly on loan from a private collection.

ISATA KANNEH-MASON, PIANO

Isata Kanneh-Mason’s 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 Isata as “a player of considerable talent.” Isata 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.

Since her studies with Joanna MacGregor and Carole Presland at London’s Royal Academy of Music, Isata 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. She also continues to perform with her siblings, including regular duo recitals with her brother, the cellist, Sheku Kanneh-Mason. Recent highlights include appearances at the Edinburgh Festival, Wigmore Hall, London, Théâtre des Champs Elysées, Paris, Teatro della Pergola, Florence, and an extensive ten-city North American tour, including their debut recital at New York’s Carnegie Hall and a return to the Vancouver Recital Society.

Isata 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. During the UK’s Covid-19 lockdown in spring 2020, she and her siblings performed in twice-weekly livestreams from their family home in Nottingham to audiences of thousands around the globe. Isata’s rendition of the first movement of Beethoven’s third piano concerto accompanied by a chamber ensemble comprised of her brothers and sisters garnered over one million views. Future live performances include at the Kissinger KlavierOlymp, BBC Radio 3’s Wigmore lunchtime concert series, the Salzburg Mozarteum, Klavier Festival Ruhr, the Kimmel Center Philadelphia, and with the Sarasota, Gothenburg Symphony, Hallé, Johannesberg Philharmonic, KwaZulu Natal Philharmonic, and Paris Mozart orchestras. From the 20/21 season, Isata will become Young Artist in Residence with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.

Isata 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. Isata made her debut as a television presenter for the coverage of the 2019 BBC Proms.

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

Exclusive Management for Sheku and Isata Kanneh-Mason: Enticott Music Management
The Philharmonic Society is excited to announce its inaugural lineup of virtual Artists-in-Residence for Fall 2020: violinist Hilary Hahn, and cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason with pianist Isata Kanneh-Mason. Spanning October to December, Artists-in-Residence will curate, organize, and produce a series of three intimate, virtual performances.

**HILARY HAHN PERFORMS AUERBACH, ABELS AND GINASTERA**

**Saturday, December 12, 7pm PST**

- AUERBACH: Lonely Violinist (Ballet for a Lonely Violinist), Op. 70
- MICHAEL ABELS: New Work (World Premiere)

On-demand streaming available for 1 week after each concert premiere

**SHEKU KANNEH-MASON & ISATA KANNEH-MASON PERFORM RACHMANINOFF**

**Sunday, December 20, 3pm PST**

- RACHMANINOFF: Sonata for Piano and Cello, Op. 19

On-demand streaming available for 24 hours after each concert premiere

**TICKETS $20/HOUSEHOLD PER CONCERT**

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JANUARY

ORPHEUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
Liev Schreiber, narrator
Karen Slack, soprano
Saturday, January 9, 2021, 7pm PST
Virtual Concert

BEETHOVEN (arr. Tarkmann): Incidental Music
from Egmont, Op. 84
Translated and Adapted by Philip Boehm

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra stands up for justice and freedom in this homage to courageous voices. Beethoven, an unyielding critic of despots, channeled his ardor and rage into music for Goethe’s historical drama about a local hero defying foreign occupiers. Liev Schreiber narrates an incisive new translation by Philip Boehm, while the clarion voice of Karen Slack and Orpheus illuminate the eternal truths of Egmont.

DECEMBER

STEPHEN HOUGH, PIANO
Friday, December 11, 2020, 7pm PST
Virtual Concert

BACH/BUSONI: Chaconne from Partita No. 2 in D minor, BWV 1004
SCHUMANN: Fantasie in C major, Op. 17
LISZT: Funérailles
LISZT: Mephisto Waltz No. 1, S. 514
TETZLAFF QUARTET
Saturday, January 16, 2021, 7pm PST
Virtual Concert

BEETHOVEN: String Quartet No. 13 in B-flat major, Op. 130
BEETHOVEN: Große Fuge, Op. 133
BEETHOVEN: String Quartet No. 15 in A minor, Op. 132

LEIF OVE ANDSNES, PIANO
Thursday, January 21, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

SCHUMANN: Three Romances, Op. 28
JANÁČEK: On an Overgrown Path, Volume 1
BARTÓK: Three Burlesques, Sz. 47
SCHUMANN: Carnaval, Op. 9

VADYM KHOLODENKO, PIANO AND BROOKLYN RIDER
Sunday, January 24, 2021, 3pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

The 2013 Cliburn Piano Competition Gold medalist Vadym Kholodenko teams up with string quartet Brooklyn Rider, which has been hailed as “the future of chamber music” (Strings) and continues to draw rave reviews from classical, world, and rock critics alike, in a chamber performance highlighting the performers’ commanding technique and creative interpretations. Program to be announced.

FEBRUARY

JOSHUA BELL, VIOLIN
Wednesday, February 10, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

Grammy Award-winning violinist Joshua Bell returns to Orange County in a recital that will enchant audiences with his breathtaking virtuosity and captivating stage presence. Program to be announced.

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA AT 100 WITH PHILIPPE QUINT AND MEMBERS OF THE JOFFREY BALLET
Philippe Quint, violin
Members of the Joffrey Ballet*
Additional artists to be announced
Tuesday, February 23, 2021, 8pm PST
Irvine Barclay Theatre

Co-presented by Irvine Barclay Theatre
Concert sponsored by Steven M. Sorenson MD
Additional support provided by the Ibex Foundation
*Appearance courtesy of the Joffrey Ballet, Ashley Wheater, Artistic Director

Multi-Grammy-nominated violinist Philippe Quint and members of the world-class, Chicago-based Joffrey Ballet celebrate the centennial of tango legend Astor Piazzolla in a performance of music and dance.

MARCH

SMETANA TRIO
Tuesday, March 2, 2021, 8pm PST
Samueli Theater

RACHMANINOFF: Trio élégiaque No. 1 in G minor
MARTINŮ: Piano Trio No. 3 in C major, H. 332
SMETANA: Piano Trio in G minor, Op 15

GEORGE LI, PIANO
Thursday, March 4, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

BEETHOVEN: Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2, “Moonlight Sonata”
BEETHOVEN: Variations and Fugue for Piano in E-flat major, Op. 35
CHOPIN: Nocturnes, Op. 27
CHOPIN: Mazurkas, Op. 59
CHOPIN: Scherzo No. 1 in B minor, Op. 20
CHOPIN: Scherzo No. 4 in E major, Op. 54
UPCOMING EVENTS

2021 Laguna Beach Music Festival
COUNTERPOINT
Festival Artistic Director: Conrad Tao, piano
Caleb Teicher, dancer
Friday, March 26, 2021, 8pm PST
Locations in Laguna Beach

Duo program with music by
Bach, Gershwin, etc.

2021 Laguna Beach Music Festival
ITS BRILLIANCE ALMOST
FRIGHTENED ME
Festival Artistic Director: Conrad Tao, piano
Saturday, March 27, 2021, 8pm PST
Locations in Laguna Beach

Laurence CRANE: Prelude No. 1
BERG: “Traumgekrönt” from Seven Early Songs
SCHUBERT: “Gretchen am spinnrade” (Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel)
Eric WUBBELS: gretchen am spinnrade
Ruth Crawford SEEGER: String Quartet
BEETHOVEN: String Quartet No. 16, Op. 135

2021 Laguna Beach Music Festival
CHANGE THIS THREAD ON WHICH
WE MOVE
Festival Artistic Director: Conrad Tao, piano
Sunday, March 28, 2021, 3pm PST
Locations in Laguna Beach

Caroline SHAW: Entr’acte (Westerlies arrangement)
DEBUSSY: Violin Sonata in G minor
GESUALDO: selected Madrigals
Other works to be announced.

APRIL

ALISA WEILERSTEIN, CELLO
AND INON BARNATAN, PIANO
Thursday, April 8, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

Select Beethoven Cello Sonatas

BRENTANO QUARTET
Friday, April 9, 2021, 8pm PST
Venue TBD

HAYDN: String Quartet No. 6 in D major, Op. 17
BARTÓK: String Quartet No. 5, Sz. 102
BRAHMS: String Quartet No. 2 in A minor, Op. 51

JERUSALEM QUARTET WITH
PINCHAS ZUKERMAN, VIOLIN AND
AMANDA FORSYTH, CELLO
Wednesday, April 21, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

BRUCKNER: Adagio from String Quintet in F major, WAB 112
DVOŘÁK: Sextet for Strings in A major, Op. 48
BRAHMS: Sextet for Strings No. 1 in B-flat major, Op. 18

JEAN-YVES THIBAUDET, PIANO
Saturday, April 24, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

DEBUSSY: Préludes Books 1 and 2

MAY

DANISH STRING QUARTET
Sunday, May 16, 2021, 3pm PST
Samueli Theater

grammy-nominated Danish String Quartet makes its second appearance in the 2020-21 season with a performance showcasing its players’ masterful technique and heartfelt expressivity. Program to be announced.
SERGIO ASSAD, CLARICE ASSAD, AND THIRD COAST PERCUSSION
Sergio Assad, guitar
Clarice Assad, piano/voice
Third Coast Percussion
Friday, May 28, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

In an exploration of global music traditions, legendary guitarist Sergio Assad, along with Clarice Assad’s spellbinding vocals and the rhythms of Grammy-winning Third Coast Percussion, will take audiences on a vast musical journey grounded in familiar stories.

JUNE

AUGUSTIN HADELICH, VIOLIN AND ORION WEISS, PIANO
Monday, June 14, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

BEETHOVEN: Violin Sonata No. 4 in A minor, Op. 23
DEBUSSY: Sonata in G minor, L. 140
COLL: Hyperlude No. 5 for Solo Violin
YSAŸE: Sonata No. 6 in E major for Solo Violin
BRAHMS: Sonata No. 2 in A major, Op. 100
DEBUSSY: L’isle joyeuse, L. 106
ADAMS: Road Movies

RENÉE FLEMING, SOPRANO
Thursday, June 17, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

In a rescheduled performance from the previous season, four-time Grammy winner and legendary soprano Renée Fleming appears in a program of beloved songs and arias.
The Philharmonic Society of Orange County gratefully acknowledges the following donors for their generous support of the Fund for Music during the past twelve months. These contributions make up the difference between the income generated from ticket sales and the actual cost of bringing the world’s finest orchestras, soloists and chamber ensembles to Orange County and inspiring 100,000 K-12 students each year with quality music programs. Gifts range from $60 to more than $100,000, and each member of the Philharmonic Society plays a valuable role in furthering the mission of this organization.

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Estate gifts allow our long-time subscribers and donors to leave an enduring legacy that helps ensure the long-term financial strength of the Philharmonic Society of Orange County. Please consider including us in your will, as either a percentage of your estate or a fixed amount. Doing so will support our commitment of presenting world-class programming and music education that enriches the cultural life of Orange County for generations to come. For more information, please contact 949.553.2422, ext. 233, or email Support@PhilharmonicSociety.org.
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Bold type indicates gifts of $50,000 or more.

Please call the Philharmonic Society Development Department if you have included either the Philharmonic Society or the separate Philharmonic Foundation in your will or trust so that we may honor you as a member of the Legacy Circle. For more information, call (949) 553-2422, ext. 233, or visit: www.PhilharmonicSociety.org/SupportUs and click on Planned Giving.

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The Philharmonic Society is proud to recognize our dedicated patrons who have made a multi-year Esterhazy Patron pledge. We are grateful for their support, which has been largely responsible for enabling us to present the world’s most acclaimed symphony orchestras, chamber ensembles and soloists.

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ABOUT US

Founded in 1954 as Orange County’s first music organization, the Philharmonic Society of Orange County presents national and international performances of the highest quality and provides dynamic and innovative music education programs for individuals of all ages to enhance the lives of Orange County audiences through music.

For more than 65 years the Philharmonic Society has evolved and grown with the county’s changing landscape, presenting artists and orchestras who set the standard for artistic achievement from Itzhak Perlman, Gustavo Dudamel, Yo-Yo Ma, and Renée Fleming to the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and many others. In addition, the Philharmonic Society celebrates multi-disciplinary performances under its Eclectic Orange brand and embraces music from a wide range of countries with its World Music performances. Its celebrated family concerts introduce children to classical music with creative and inspiring performances, instilling music appreciation for future generations.

The Philharmonic Society’s nationally recognized Youth Music Education Programs, offered free of charge, engage more than 100,000 students annually through curriculum-based music education programs that aim to inspire, expand imaginations, and encourage learning at all levels. These programs are made possible by the Committees of the Philharmonic Society comprised of 700 volunteer members who provide more than 90,000 hours of in-kind service each year.

As a key youth program, the exceptional Orange County Youth Symphony and String Ensemble provide top-tier training to the area’s most talented young musicians through multi-level ensemble instruction, leadership training, touring opportunities, challenging professional repertoire, and performances in world-class venues. The Philharmonic Society also promotes life-long learning by connecting with colleges and universities to conduct masterclasses and workshops and providing pre-concert lectures to introduce audiences to program selections.