



Sunday, October 29, 2017, 3pm
Hertz Hall

Anssi Karttunen, *cello*
Nicolas Hodges, *piano*

PROGRAM

- Ashkan BEHZADI (b. 1983) *Fling* for Cello and Piano
(United States Premiere)
- Ludwig van BEETHOVEN (1770–1827) Sonata No. 5 for Cello and Piano in D Major,
Op. 102, No. 2
Allegro con brio
Adagio con molto sentimento d'affetto —
Allegro fugato
- Pascal DUSAPIN (b. 1955) *Slackline* for Cello and Piano
(United States Premiere, Cal Performances
Commission)
Peaceful
Feverish... impatient...
Calm (and relieved)
Exuberant (but not extravagant)

INTERMISSION

- Sean SHEPHERD (b. 1979) *Aquaria* for Cello and Piano
(World Premiere, Cal Performances
Commission)
- Johannes BRAHMS (1833–1897) Sonata No. 2 for Cello and Piano in F Major,
Op. 99
Allegro vivace
Adagio affettuoso
Allegro passionato
Allegro molto

Cal Performances' 2017–18 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

***Fling* for Cello and Piano (2017, US Premiere)
Ashkan Behzadi**

Ashkan Behzadi, born in Teheran, Iran in 1983, took his first piano lessons when he was seven years old and started to compose as a teenager, but earned his bachelor's degree in architecture at Tehran University, though he did study piano and composition privately during that time. Behzadi began to pursue music professionally when he enrolled for advanced work in composition at McGill University in Montreal, where his teachers included Chris Harman and Brian Cherney (composition), Philippe Leroux and Sean Ferguson (electronic music), and Kyoko Hashimoto (piano). After completing his studies at McGill, Behzadi moved to New York, where he is now pursuing a doctoral degree in composition at Columbia University with Fred Lerdahl and teaching at Montclair State University in New Jersey. Behzadi's music has been performed internationally and recognized with numerous prizes that include the American Composers Forum Showcase Competition (2015), Prix de Composition at Fontainebleau (2013), and SOCAN [Society of Composers, Authors, and Music Publishers of Canada] Foundation Awards (2012, 2013).

Behzadi composed *Fling* in 2017 for cellist Anssi Karttunen, who premiered it with pianist Nicolas Hodges in Paris on April 22, 2017. The composer wrote of it, "*Fling* is made of layers of material flowing in a fervent, malleable texture. At times, the whole structure is twisted, as if the same material was being heard from a different angle. The imprecise clusters in the piano, the core rough material of the piece, are morphed by contrasting yet limited gestures in the cello. The form is organized around repeated musical moments, like a collage of bursts of energy, ranging from aggressive to joyful, delicate to mournful. I consider *Fling* to be a continuation of a series of chamber pieces I have composed since 2012 whose titles carried the words 'plastic' or 'plastically.' In these pieces, I approached my material as a 'plastic' object and, like a sculptor, forged my music by curving and adding layers to the core 'plastic' material. While *Fling* primarily relies on similar sets of

compositional techniques as those of the other chamber pieces, the unexpected and rapturous gestures of the work's surface sharply cut off the compositional process, bending the form to the point of shattering."

**Sonata No. 5 for Cello and Piano in D Major,
Op. 102, No. 2 (1815)****Ludwig van Beethoven**

Though 1814 was one of the most successful years of Beethoven's life as a public figure—the revival of *Fidelio* was a resounding success; his occasional pieces for concerts given in association with the Congress of Vienna that year were applauded by some of Europe's noblest personages; the clangorous *Wellington's Victory* became an overnight hit—he produced little in the way of important new compositions during that time. For the year 1815, the composer's biographer Thayer lists only some vocal settings, a couple of canons, the little-known overture *Namensfeier*, and the two Op. 102 sonatas for cello. Those years of near creative silence marked a turning point in Beethoven's compositional career, one whose outcome was the incomparable series of towering masterworks written during his last decade. The Op. 102 cello sonatas, which formed the gateway to that remarkable period of renewal and discovery, were little understood when they were new. "Eccentric," "unusual," and "peculiar" commented the reviewers of the day, and they criticized the works for exactly the qualities that now serve as their greatest distinctions—seriousness of expressive purpose, harmonic originality, absolute equality of piano and cello, lack of virtuosity, and, perhaps above all, richness of contrapuntal texture. The obsession of Beethoven's later years with the ancient techniques of fugue and imitative counterpoint finds one of its earliest realizations in the D-Major Cello Sonata, his last work in the form for string instrument and keyboard. Indeed, the finale *in toto* is a carefully worked-out and tightly packed fugal Allegro. The opening movement is remarkable for its restraint and introspection, and for the masterly manner in which cello and piano are thoroughly integrated

into its sonata structure. The rapt central Adagio is music of transcendent peacefulness such as few composers have ever created. John N. Burk felt that Beethoven wrote it “in a sort of trance, as if he were listening to some mystic inner prompting,” while the composer’s amanuensis and biographer, Anton Schindler, believed that this movement and the entire sonata were “among the richest and most sensitive inspirations in Beethoven’s music.”

***Slackline* for Cello and Piano (2015)**
(US Premiere, Cal Performances Commission)
Pascal Dusapin

Pascal Dusapin seems to be inherently musically and intellectually omnivorous. He was born on May 29, 1955 in Nancy, France into a musical household, where he was exposed equally to jazz, pop, and classical music as a youngster. Dusapin’s earliest ambition was to study clarinet but his father insisted on piano lessons, which led to an interest in organ when he was 10 years old. He studied musicology, art, and art history at the Sorbonne in the early 1970s, but had the direction of his life changed when he heard a performance of *Arcana* by the iconoclastic French-American composer Edgard Varèse when he was 18. Dusapin thereafter set upon music as his calling and attended some of Messiaen’s classes at the Conservatoire, but he found his mentor in 1974 when he began studying with the Greek composer, architect, engineer, and mathematician Iannis Xenakis. During his four years with Xenakis, Dusapin began composing in earnest, and in 1977, he won the Fondation de la Vocation Prize. A Prix de Rome followed four years later, which enabled him to take composition lessons with the Italian modernist Franco Donatoni. Since returning to Paris in 1983, Dusapin has lived largely as an independent composer; his resume includes few continuing commitments other than a residency with the Orchestre National de Lyon (1993–95), Artistic Chairman at the Collège de France (2006–07), and guest professor at the Musikhochschule in Munich (2010–11). Among Dusapin’s numerous honors are the Prize of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, Hervé

Dugardin Prize, Prix du Syndicat de la Critique, Grand Prix National de Musique from the French Ministry of Culture, the one-million-dollar David Dan Prize (shared with Zubin Mehta), Prize for Symphonic Music from SACEM (the French Society of Authors, Composers, and Publishers of Music), and membership in the Bayerische Académie in Munich.

Dusapin’s compositions—operas, symphonic works, vocal scores, chamber music, piano pieces—reflect his wide-ranging interests in biology, philosophy, photography, art, architecture, theater, and literature as well as a range of musical idioms, and are often conceived organically, a process that has been described as composing “measure by measure, deciding what he wants to happen next when he gets there. This process slightly alludes to the chance-like aspect of aleatory music, but Dusapin’s music is so precisely composed that it cannot truly be aleatoric.” (“Aleatory” comes from the Latin for “dice player” or “gambler,” i.e., events determined randomly.)

Dusapin composed *Slackline* in 2015 for cellist Anssi Karttunen, who premiered it with pianist Nicolas Hodges at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires on October 13, 2016. Karttunen, to whom the score in dedicated, wrote, “*Slackline* is in four movements that are both contrasting and related consequences of each other. The reflective first movement explores the extreme registers of the two instruments, hinting at conflicts. The almost impossibly fast second movement admits recognizable influences from other genres. The third movement opens a vast landscape in which the anxieties of the previous movements have frozen, not disappeared. The last movement is the explosion of the inevitable, which leads eventually to acceptance. The piece, which never offers an illusion of optimism, finishes in mature tranquility. Composed exactly 100 years after Debussy’s Sonata for Cello and Piano, *Slackline* is in its size and emotional scale a direct continuation of the tradition of the great instrumental duos of the late-19th and early-20th centuries. With *Slackline* the cello-piano repertoire now has a new masterpiece, almost Mahlerian in its scale.”

***Aquaria for Cello and Piano*
(2017, World Premiere)****Sean Shepherd**

Sean Shepherd, one of the most gifted of America's young generation of composers, was born in Reno, Nevada in 1979 and studied composition and bassoon performance at Indiana University, where his teachers included Claude Baker and David Dzubay (composition) and Kim Walker (bassoon); he completed his master's degree in composition at Juilliard as a student of Robert Beaser and did his doctoral work at Cornell with Roberto Sierra and Steven Stucky. Shepherd also attended master classes at Tanglewood and Aspen as well as the Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme in Aldeburgh, England. In addition to numerous international commissions and performances by many leading soloists and ensembles, Shepherd has accumulated an impressive array of distinctions: the Robbins Family Prize from Cornell, Palmer Dixon Prize from Juilliard, Indiana University Dean's Award, the triennial Benjamin H. Danks Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, USA Van Dusen Fellow of United States Artists, Deutsche Bank Fellow at the American Academy in Berlin, International Lutoslawski Award, and residencies with the Cleveland Orchestra, Camargo Foundation (Cassis, France) and Reno Philharmonic. Shepherd is also a writer on music, with his commentaries appearing at *Playbill*, WQXR's Q2 online blog, and the American Music Center's NewMusicBox.com.

***Sonata No. 2 for Cello and Piano in F Major*,
Op. 99 (1886)****Johannes Brahms**

The F-Major Cello Sonata, like many of the works from Brahms' fullest maturity, is suffused with an autumnal glow that speaks of the composer's satisfaction with his life at that time. "That Brahms was very happy in Hofstetten is evident from the works he composed there," wrote William Murdoch. "He had finished his Fourth Symphony, and had led its premiere [on October 25, 1885 in Meiningen]. He was everywhere acclaimed, and his fame was worldwide. He had no more obstacles to overcome,

and his works from now onward give that impression of security and certainty that can only be the outcome of a contented mind and a knowledge of mastery. Sadness and heartfelt emotion we shall find, but no longer that yearning after the unattainable that so often pervaded his earlier works." The first edition of the F-Major Sonata, published by Simrock in 1887, noted that the piece is "for Piano and Violoncello," an indication of the complete integration of the participants that marks Brahms' greatest instrumental works.

The sonata is in four expansive movements (Robert Schumann, in his 1853 article heralding the arrival of Brahms on the German musical scene, referred to his chamber compositions as "veiled symphonies"), whose expressive characters Florence May, the English pianist who studied with Brahms in the 1870s and eventually became his biographer, summarized thus: "the first broad and energetic; the second touching; the third passionate; the fourth vivacious." Three ideas comprise the first movement's exposition: the cello's main theme, anticipatory in its leaping motion and snapping rhythms, is supported by the piano's restless tremolos; the arching second subject is smoother in contour and gentler in expression; the agitated closing motive is urged on by strong repeated figurations. The development section is woven from all three themes, though its character is largely dominated by the restless tremolos that opened the movement. A full recapitulation and a coda based on the main theme provide formal balance for the movement. The second movement, "among the finest of the master's Adagios" according to William Murdoch, follows a leisurely three-part form (A-B-A): the outer sections begin with a broad piano theme buoyed upon resonant pizzicato notes in the cello; the central episode is more animated and somewhat melancholy. The third movement is a scherzo whose impassioned mood is balanced by the sweetly flowing trio at its center. The finale-rondo, generally lightweight in character, is given emotional substance by the darkly colored passage that occupies its middle region.

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Irmeli Jung

Anssi Karttunen (*cello*) has always been on the cutting edge of classical music performance and is one of the most innovative cellists on today's international music scene. He started learning his instrument as a four-year-old in Finland, a uniquely fertile ground for music and musicians, and subsequently built up a worldwide reputation both as a soloist and chamber musician. In his repertoire, Karttunen takes a fresh look at the work of well-known composers and brings forgotten masterpieces to the public ear, as well as his own original transcriptions. He plays on modern, classical, and Baroque cellos, as well as the violoncello piccolo.

Karttunen is a passionate advocate of contemporary music. He has performed over 160 world premieres, collaborating with such composers as Magnus Lindberg, Kaija Saariaho, Rolf Wallin, Luca Francesconi, and Tan Dun. An astounding 29 concertos have been written for him. Karttunen premiered Magnus Lindberg's Cello Concerto No. 1 with the Orchestre de Paris (1999) as well as his Cello Concerto No. 2 with the Los Angeles Philharmonic (2013), Esa-Pekka Salonen's *Mania* with Avanti! (2000), Martin Matalon's Cello Concerto with the Orchestre National de France (2001), and Luca Francesconi's *Rest* with the RAI Torino (2004). Kaija Saariaho wrote the concerto *Notes on Light* for Karttunen, which he premiered with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, who commissioned the work (2007). He subsequently performed the work with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Swedish Radio, NDR Symphony Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, and the New World Symphony. Future premieres include works by

Denis Cohen, Pascal Dusapin, Jérôme Combier, Betsy Jolas, Oliver Knussen, and Magnus Lindberg, as well as a special project with Led Zeppelin legend John Paul Jones.

Karttunen has worked with world-renowned orchestras such as the Philadelphia Orchestra, BBC Symphony, NHK Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Danish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic, Helsinki Philharmonic, New World Symphony, and many more. He also performs regularly as a soloist and chamber musician at Europe's most important music festivals. His Zebra Trio, with violinist Ernst Kovacic and violist Steven Dann, performs concerts on both sides of the Atlantic. Karttunen also enjoys a close collaboration with choreographer Diana Theocharidis.

His recordings traverse a broad musical spectrum, including Beethoven's complete works for cello and piano on period instruments, 20th-century solo pieces, and concertos performed with the London Sinfonietta and the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra under Esa-Pekka Salonen. Karttunen has released recordings of concertos by Lindberg, Saariaho, and Salonen, as well as a DVD of Tan Dun's *The Map* for cello, video, and orchestra. Two of his recordings were nominated for a Gramophone Award in 2013: a CD of Magnus Lindberg's chamber music works with the composer and the clarinetist Kari Kriikku (*Ondine*); and Henri Dutilleux' *Tout un monde lointain*, with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France under Esa-Pekka Salonen (Deutsche Grammophon). Karttunen's recent recordings include his own transcriptions of Bach and Telemann; Brahms' String Quintet (*Toccata Classics*); and two tango CDs (*Petals* and *Albany*).

Born in 1960, Anssi Karttunen studied with Erkki Rautio, William Pleeth, Jacqueline du Pré, and Tibor de Machula, among others. From 1999 until 2005 he was principal cellist with the London Sinfonietta. Karttunen was the artistic director of the Avanti! Chamber Orchestra between 1994 and 1998; the Suvisoitto Festival in Porvoo, Finland from 1994 until 1997; the Helsinki Biennale in 1995 and 1997; and the Festival Musica Nova Helsinki in 2015.



Nicolas Hodges (*piano*) commands an active repertoire that encompasses such composers as Beethoven, Berg, Brahms, Debussy, Schubert, and Stravinsky, all of whom reinforce his special prowess in contemporary music. As *Tempo* magazine has written: “Hodges is a refreshing artist; he plays the classics as if they were written yesterday, and what was written yesterday as if it were already a classic.”

Born in London and now based in Germany, where he is a professor at the Musikhochschule Stuttgart, Hodges approaches the works of Classical, Romantic, 20th-century, and contemporary composers with the same questing spirit, leading the *Guardian* to comment, “Hodges’ recitals always boldly go where few other pianists dare... with an energy that sometimes defies belief.”

Cooperating closely with major and very different contemporary composers such as John Adams and Helmut Lachenmann is an important part of Hodges’ work. Many of them have dedicated works to Hodges, including Thomas Adès, George Aperghis, Gerald Barry, Harrison Birtwistle, Elliott Carter, James Clarke, Francisco Coll, Hugues Dufourt, Pascal Dusapin, Luca Francesconi, Beat Furrer, Isabel Mundry, Brice Pauset, Rolf Riehm, Wolfgang Rihm, Salvatore Sciarrino, and Miroslav Srnka.

Highlights of past seasons include the premiere of an award-winning piano concerto by Simon Steen-Andersen as part of the 2014 Donaueschingen Festival with François-Xavier Roth and the SWR Symphony Orchestra Freiburg Baden-Baden, as well as the world premiere of *Variations from the Golden Mountains* (Birtwistle) in London’s Wigmore Hall. Hodges played the Berlin premiere of Elliott Carter’s

Dialogues for piano and orchestra with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the German premiere with the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by Daniel Barenboim. He also performed the world premiere of Adès’ *In Seven Days* piano concerto with the London Sinfonietta followed by further performances with the London Symphony Orchestra and Los Angeles Philharmonic.

As a concerto soloist, Hodges’ engagements include regular performances with the BBC Symphony, Boston Symphony, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Melbourne Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Philharmonia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic, Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, and ensembles including the ASKO/Schoenberg Ensemble Amsterdam, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, Contrechamps Geneva, and the Remix Ensemble in Porto. Among the distinguished conductors with whom Hodges collaborates are Thomas Adès, Daniel Barenboim, George Benjamin, Sylvain Cambreling, James Levine, David Robertson, Pascal Rophé, François-Xavier Roth, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Ilan Volkov, and Ryan Wigglesworth.

As a recitalist, Hodges has performed throughout the world, including at major venues in Berlin, Hamburg, Helsinki, London, Madrid, Melbourne, New York, Paris, Salzburg, Strasbourg, Stuttgart, Vienna, and Zurich. Along with Anssi Karttunen, Hodges’ regular chamber music partners include the Arditti Quartet, Adrian Brendel, Colin Currie, Ilya Gringolts, Michael Wendeborg, Carolin Widmann, and as a member of the Trio Accanto.

Nicolas Hodges’ discography includes Adès’ *In Seven Days* with the London Sinfonietta and Thomas Adès (Signum Classic). In 2015 a CD with works by Harrison Birtwistle as well as a live recording of Luca Francesconi’s Piano Concerto with the Orquestra Sinfónica Casa da Musica and the Remix Ensemble Porto were released. In autumn 2016 a new CD, *Voces Abandonadas*, was released with works by Walter Zimmermann (Wergo).