

Sunday, November 20, 2022, 3pm  
Hertz Hall

**Zlatomir Fung, *cello***  
**Janice Carissa, *piano***

PROGRAM

Charles IVES (1874–1954) Four Songs from *114 Songs*,  
arr. for cello and piano (1919–1922)  
53. In the Alley  
38. The Collection  
102. Memories  
104. Two Little Flowers

Antonín DVOŘÁK (1841–1904) Rondo for Cello and Piano in G minor,  
Op. 94 (1891)

Ludwig van BEETHOVEN (1770–1827) Sonata for Cello and Piano in A major,  
Op. 69 (1807–1808)  
Allegro ma non tanto  
Scherzo. Allegro molto  
Adagio cantabile – Allegro vivace

INTERMISSION

Judith WEIR (b. 1954) *Unlocked for Solo Cello* (1999)  
Make Me a Garment  
No Justice  
The Wind Blow East  
The Keys to the Prison  
Trouble, Trouble

George WALKER (1922–2018) Sonata for Cello and Piano (1957)  
Allegro passionato  
Sostenuto  
Allegro

*Support for Zlatomir Fung is provided by Fred Levin, The Shenson Foundation.*

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Photographing and/or recording this performance is strictly prohibited.



**Charles Ives**  
**Four Songs from *114 Songs*,**  
**arr. for cello and piano**

Over the course of his life, Charles Ives—successful insurance man by day and prolific maverick composer by night—composed more than 150 songs in an extraordinary variety of styles about anything that caught his fancy. Between 1919 and 1922, he decided to gather them together—polishing songs written in his youth and adding more—into *114 Songs*, a virtual autobiography of his life in notes and verse (since he also wrote many of the lyrics). He then published the volume at his own expense, along with a literary “Postlude” detailing his iconoclastic philosophy about music in general and songwriting in particular.

Ives’ songs, like his equally eclectic instrumental music, contain everything from sentimental parlor melodies in styles popular at the turn of the 20th century—such as “In the Alley” and “The Collection”—to path-breaking experiments in harmony and polytonality. Sometimes both the popular and the radical are combined in the same piece, such as the two-section “Memories” and “The Collection,” with its highly chromatic piano prelude and interlude flirting with atonality while the vocal lines are decorously conventional. And sometimes they are pure art songs in the European style, like “Two Little Flowers.”

More about “Two Little Flowers”: During World War I, the childless Ives couple took in a little girl named Edith from an impoverished New York City family and eventually decided to adopt her. The pretty, golden-haired child brightened their lives and is the subject of this 1921 song setting a text by Ives and his wife, Harmony. Fragile and lovely in a style reminiscent of French impressionism, the song depicts Edith and her close friend Susanna playing in the Ives garden.

**Antonín Dvořák**  
**Rondo for Cello and Piano in G minor,**  
**Op. 94**

Before traveling to America in 1892 for an extended stay, Antonín Dvořák toured Bohemia and Moravia for five months, giving concerts of his chamber works with his two favorite trio partners, violinist Ferdinand Lachner and cellist Hanus Wihan. In planning his trip, Dvořák found that, since the tour began in January, he needed to quickly write something for his cellist. (Wihan was later to be the dedicatee of the composer’s renowned Cello Concerto.) Thus, he spent Christmas Day of 1891 creating the melodious Rondo for Cello and Piano in G minor. Two years later, while working in New York City, he arranged the work for cello with chamber orchestra. Paying tribute to a Wihan specialty, the piece features extensive passages for the cello in its highest soprano register.

Set in a relaxed *Allegretto grazioso* tempo, this work follows the classical rondo form of ABACABA, with A being a jaunty, dancing refrain theme led by the cello. The B section is smoother and more lyrical, with the cello playing a nostalgic theme over the piano’s arpeggios. Dvořák significantly increases the tempo for the virtuoso C section, which is lengthier and more dramatic than what has come before. On their returns, the A and B sections are elaborated, taking on a richer and more serious coloration. By the closing coda, the Rondo has become a much weightier piece than its opening had suggested.

**Ludwig van Beethoven**  
**Sonata for Cello and Piano in A major,**  
**Op. 69**

The turn of the 18th into the 19th century brought advances in construction not only for the violin and piano but for the cello as



well. Throughout the Baroque and early Classical periods, it had primarily played the essential but unglamorous role of *continuo* in ensembles: providing the ground bass for harmonic movement. But the development of the end pin securing the cello to the ground gave it greater resonance. And virtuoso cellists swiftly developed refined techniques that enabled the instrument at last to claim the solo role that Bach had first envisioned.

Haydn exploited the cello's newfound prominence with two famous cello concertos. But it was Beethoven, with his five cello sonatas, who did the most to move this rich-toned singer to center stage. And in his Triple Concerto, he actually made the cello the leader among his soloists.

His Third Cello Sonata was written between 1807 and 1808 at about the time he was composing his Fifth and Sixth symphonies. It is dedicated to Baron Ignaz von Gleichenstein, who at this time was one of the composer's closest friends, handled many of his business affairs, and was moreover an outstanding amateur cellist. The manuscript score shows Beethoven labored hard to achieve a balanced partnership between the dark-toned cello and the brilliant, percussive piano.

In overall tone, this lovely work harkens back to slightly earlier Beethoven pieces, notably the Violin Concerto, with its emphasis on singing lyricism and a mood of serene optimism. Therefore, Beethoven's superscription on the manuscript score seems puzzling: "Inter Lachrimas et Luctum" ("Amid Tears and Sorrow"). Whatever sorrow he may have been feeling at that time is thoroughly sublimated in this music.

Two major lyric themes and a number of attractive subsidiary melodies propel the sonata-form first movement. The noble first theme, so well suited to the cello, is the real leader, dominating both the development section and the fine closing coda. Following

a brief, stormy excursion into the minor mode, the cello introduces the more ecstatic second theme, soaring upward on a long scale into its expressive alto register.

The second-movement scherzo is a Beethovenian rhythmic game in which cello and piano are usually out of step with each other. The piano opens with a lurching syncopated theme. But when the cello tries to imitate its limping gait, the piano straightens up for a regular ONE-two-three rhythm, launching a continual tug of war. This A-minor scherzo alternates with a mellow trio in A major featuring warm chords for the cello; the piano continues limping off-the-beat in the background.

A gorgeous *cantabile* (singing) rhapsody—an embryonic slow movement—opens the finale. But after only 18 measures, it breaks off for the *Allegro vivace* finale proper, which combines two themes with dashing energy. In this sonata-form movement, we hear much more of the spirited first theme, which Beethoven makes the subject of his development section. But the second theme deserves our attention, as well: it begins with a little pleading phrase in the cello's high register so eloquent it almost speaks words. Throughout, Beethoven provides plenty of sparkling fast passage-work to show off both soloists' virtuosity.

### Judith Weir

#### *Unlocked for Solo Cello*

Like Ralph Vaughan Williams and Béla Bartók, Judith Weir's creative voice has been heavily influenced by her study of folk music—in her case, not just folk music from her native England but from many places and times. And also like those two earlier composers, she does not simply quote folksongs or copy their shapes in her melodies. Instead, she uses folk materials, in the words of David C.H. Wright, "as a creative spur, resonating with complementary elements of her own musical personality."

Weir is in the forefront of a remarkable group of women composers in the UK, and her operas have won particular favor. She has also composed music for the spoken theater, creating scores for the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Royal National Theatre (its production of Sophocles' Oedipus cycle). Her focus on the voice and on dramatic storytelling carries over into her chamber music as well.

For this program, Zlatomir Fung has chosen Weir's *Unlocked* for unaccompanied cello (1999), which draws its inspiration from folksongs of the American South. Here are her comments about the piece:

*Unlocked* arises out of my interest in the magnificent collection of American folksongs in the Library of Congress in Washington, collected by John and Alan Lomax in the 1930s. A significant proportion of the songs were collected from prisoners—mostly Black prisoners—in Southern jails. The piece is made up of freely composed cello “fantasias” inspired by five of these songs:

No. 1 (“Make Me a Garment”) is based on a song sung by a prisoner in Florida, who was found by the Lomaxes in the tuberculosis ward and could only whisper his song.

No. 2 (“No Justice”) is a set of variations, using extended playing techniques, growing out of a simple prison song from Georgia (original title “Oh we don't get no justice in Atlanta”).

No. 3 (“The Wind Blow East”) comes from fragments of a chorus heard in the Bahamas; it represents the prisoner's dream of a better life.

No. 4 (“The Keys to the Prison”) is based on an original song sung by a 15-year-old Cajun girl in French. In the song, a boy in prison sings to his mother, “Hey mom, I've got the keys to the prison and I'm going to escape.” She says “How come, when the warders have the keys hanging round their necks?” The music

composed around it is very fast and agile, and for me represents the prisoner's fantasy that the prison doors are suddenly wide open, and the guards are all gone.

No. 5 (“Trouble, Trouble”) is a transcription/arrangement of a blues sung by a prisoner in Alabama.

### **George Walker (1922–2018)** **Sonata for Cello and Piano**

One of America's foremost 20th-century composers, George Theophilus Walker was a pioneer for most of his distinguished career. In 1945, he was the first African-American graduate of Philadelphia's esteemed Curtis Institute, and shortly thereafter, he became the first Black instrumentalist to give a recital in New York's Town Hall and to perform as a soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra (playing Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto under Eugene Ormandy). In 1956, he was the first African-American to earn a doctorate from the Eastman School of Music. And in 1996, he crowned these accomplishments by becoming the first Black recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for Music, America's highest musical accolade, for his *Lilacs* for soloist and orchestra, commissioned by the Boston Symphony.

These achievements were astonishing for a man, born of Jamaican-American parents, who grew up in a generation when opportunities for African-American classical musicians were virtually nil. After finishing high school at the precocious age of 14, Walker graduated with honors from Curtis at an equally remarkable 18. Awarded a Fulbright scholarship, he made the pilgrimage to Fontainebleau in France, to study with the legendary pedagogue Nadia Boulanger.

Despite devoting most of the early years of his career to performing, Dr. Walker ultimately became a prolific composer in all musical genres, receiving commissions from such renowned ensembles as the

Cleveland Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Atlanta Symphony, and the Boys Choir of Harlem. Composed in 1957, his *Sonata for Cello and Piano* reveals his complete understanding of the qualities of both instruments, the cello as well as his own instrument, the piano. Writes cellist Seth Parker Woods in *Strings* magazine, “This sonata is truly one of the lesser-known masterpieces of the repertoire.... It is a treasure and needs to be repositioned in the American classical music canon.”

In sonata form, the *Allegro passionato* first movement is the work’s most traditional. The cello’s urgent principal theme surges out of the piano’s rolling ostinato and then grows into a lively dialogue between the two instruments. Played in warm double stops, the cello’s second theme is slower, more pensive, and tinged with regret. The development section intensifies both moods as the piano becomes more aggressive in driving the music forward.

Marked “sostenuto,” the very slow second movement is an intensely expressive aria for the cello, tactfully supported by the piano.

Woods comments that it “is intertwined with echoes of blues sonorities and a feeling of unrequited love. A soaring melodic line, which feels almost timid at the beginning, overtakes the piano part at its apex.” Throughout, Walker uses reflective pauses to draw us in deeper.

With its rapidly shifting moods and rhythmic intricacy, the finale is a challenge for both players. Woods again: “Fiery and playful, the cello takes on the role of both lead voice and blues-inspired walking bass that gets traded back and forth with the piano. Angular in shape, its unrelenting drive and fast meter changes keep the duo on their toes.” Near the end, Walker doubles the music’s speed. “I have found myself both smiling from sheer joy and holding on for dear life, especially as the piece nears the coda.”

—Janet E. Bedell © 2022

*Janet E. Bedell is a program annotator and feature writer who writes for Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Caramoor Festival of the Arts, and other musical organizations.*

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## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The first American in four decades and youngest musician ever to win First Prize at the International Tchaikovsky Competition Cello Division, **Zlatomir Fung** is poised to become one of the preeminent cellists of our time. Astounding audiences with his boundless virtuosity and exquisite sensitivity, the 23-year-old has already proven himself to be a star among the next generation of world-class musicians. A recipient of the Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship 2022 and a 2020 Avery Fisher Career Grant, Fung’s impeccable technique demonstrates mastery of the canon and exceptional insight into the depths of contemporary repertoire.

In the 2022–23 season, Fung performs with orchestras and gives recitals in all corners of the world. Orchestral engagements include the BBC and Rochester philharmonic orchestras; the Milwaukee, Reading, Lincoln, Ridgefield, and Sante Fe symphonies; the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra, Sarasota Orchestra, and APEX Ensemble. He gives the world premiere of a new cello concerto by Katherine Balch with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and he plays recitals throughout North America with pianists Benjamin Hochman, Dina Vainshtein, and Janice Carissa, including stops in New York City, Chicago, and San



L. Jung Huang

Diego, Los Alamos (NM), Rockville (MD), Melbourne (FL), Vancouver and Sechelt (BC), Northampton (MA), Providence (RI), Burlington (VT), and Waterford (VA). Tours of Europe and Asia include a recital at Wigmore Hall and two performances at Cello Biënnale Amsterdam.

Recent summer festival appearances include the Aspen Music Festival, Bravo! Vail with the New York Philharmonic and Leonard Slatkin, ChamberFest Cleveland, Chamber Music Northwest, La Jolla Chamber Music Society, Rockport Chamber Music Festival, and Verbier. As a soloist, Fung has appeared with the Detroit, Kansas City, Seattle, Utah, Greensboro, Ann Arbor, and Asheville symphonies, among many others. Past recital highlights include his Carnegie Hall Weill Recital Hall debut with pianist Mishka Rushdie Momen and multiple tours throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. As a chamber musician, he has been

presented by the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Philharmonic Society of Orange County, IMS Prussia Cove, Syrinx Concerts in Toronto, the Embassy Series & the Phillips Collection in Washington DC, and Salon de Virtuosi and Bulgarian Concert Evenings in New York City.

A winner of the 2017 Young Concert Artists International Auditions and the 2017 Astral National Auditions, Fung has taken the top prizes at the 2018 Alice & Eleonore Schoenfeld International String Competition, 2016 George Enescu International Cello Competition, 2015 Johansen International Competition for Young String Players, 2014 Stulberg International String Competition, and 2014 Irving Klein International Competition. He was selected as a 2016 US Presidential Scholar for the Arts and was awarded the 2016 Landgrave von Hesse Prize at the Kronberg Academy Cello Masterclasses.



Of Bulgarian-Chinese heritage, Zlatomir Fung began playing cello at age three. He studied at the Juilliard School under the tutelage of Richard Aaron and Timothy Eddy. Fung has been featured on NPR's *Performance Today* and has appeared on *From the Top* six times. In addition to music, he enjoys cinema, reading, and blitz chess.

Recently named a Gilmore Young Artist and winner of Salon de Virtuosi, **Janice Carissa** has "the multicolored highlights of a mature pianist" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*) and "strong, sure hands" (Voice of America) that convey "a vivid story rather than a mere showpiece" (*Chicago Classical Review*).

Throughout the course of her solo career, she has substituted for André Watts as soloist with Orpheus Chamber Orchestra; featured twice with the Philadelphia Orchestra; and debuted with Kansas City, Amarillo, Des Moines, Symphony in C, John Hopkins, St. Peters by the Sea, Eastern Wind, Bay Atlantic, and Midwest Young Artist Symphony.

She has concertized at Sydney Opera House, Carnegie Hall, the United Nations, WQXR's Greene Space, the Kennedy Center, Millennium Park's Jay Pritzker Pavilion, Louis Vuitton Foundation, and Saratoga Performing Arts Center; and appeared

on radio station WQXR (*Young Artist Showcase*), NPR (*From The Top*), The Violin Channel's Vanguard Series, and PBS' *Now Hear This*. Carissa is an alumna of the Lang Lang Young Scholars Program.

An avid chamber musician, Carissa appears regularly with Ensemble 132 and Jupiter Chamber Players. She is a past participant at the Marlboro, North Shore, Ravinia, Caramoor's Evnin Rising Star, and Kneisel Hall festivals, and has toured with Musicians from Ravinia. Carissa has appeared on stage with Vadim Gluzman, Miriam Fried, Paul Neubauer, Lucy Shelton, Marcy Rosen, Pamela Frank, David Shifrin, Jennifer Cano, and Peter Wiley.

Raised in Indonesia, Carissa earned her bachelor's degree in music at the Curtis Institute of Music with Gary Graffman and Robert McDonald. Now based in New York, she is a graduate Kovner Fellow at the Juilliard School of Music, studying under Robert McDonald.

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