



**VANVRS!**

**FALL CONCERTS 2022**

**Jamal Aliyev** cello

**Fazıl Say** piano

Sunday October 30 2022

# From the Artistic Director

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Dear Friends:

We are delighted to welcome cellist Jamal Aliyev and pianist Fazıl Say in their first visit to Vancouver. Whilst Jamal is still a relative newcomer to the concert stages of North America, Fazıl is internationally renowned as a pianist and composer and is a superstar in his native Turkey.

We're very happy to hear Fazıl's Sonata for Cello and Piano, Op. 41 alongside two chestnuts of the repertoire, Schubert's *Arpeggione* Sonata and César Franck's Sonata.

A great big thank you to the Vancouver Recital Society's Season Sponsor, the Peak Group of Companies, and to Alexandra Volkoff for sponsoring today's performance.

This concert is one of our Next Generation Performances and, as such, receives valuable support from the Estate of Edwina and Paul Heller and the RBC Emerging Artists program. We are grateful also to the City of Vancouver and the Province of British Columbia for their ongoing support of all our activities.

Finally, we'd like to thank Tom Lee Music for allowing us to use one of their pianos for today's performance.

We hope that you enjoy the concert.

Most sincerely,



Leila Getz



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The use of cellphones and recording devices is prohibited in the concert hall. Please take this opportunity to turn off all electronic devices.

音乐厅内禁止使用手机，禁止拍照，录音，录像。请观众关闭所有电子器材，感谢您的合作。

# Program

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**Jamal Aliyev** cello  
**Fazıl Say** piano

Sunday October 30 2022 3:00 pm  
Vancouver Playhouse

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828)  
**Sonata in A minor for Arpeggione and Piano  
D. 821**

Allegro moderato  
Adagio  
Allegretto

[approx. 22 minutes]

FAZIL SAY (b. 1970)  
**Dört Şehir (Four Cities)**  
**Sonata for Cello and Piano Op. 41**

Sivas. Andante moderato tranquillo  
Hopa (Black Sea dance). Prestissimo, as fast  
as possible  
Ankara. Andante drammatico  
Bodrum.

[approx. 23 minutes]

INTERMISSION

CÉSAR FRANCK (1822-1890)  
**Sonata for Cello and Piano in A major**

Allegretto ben moderato  
Allegro  
Recitativo-Fantasia  
Allegretto poco mosso

[approx. 30 minutes]

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# Jamal Aliyev cello

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**Early Life & Education:** Born in Baku, Azerbaijan in 1993, Jamal studied at the Yehudi Menuhin School and at the Royal College of Music with Thomas Carroll.

**This Season:** During the 2021-22 season, Jamal toured with Sir Karl Jenkins and the London Concert Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall (London), St. David's (Cardiff), CBSO Centre (Birmingham), Bridgewater Hall (Manchester) and the Royal Concert Hall (Nottingham). He gave the Turkish premiere of Fazıl Say's cello concerto 'Shahmaran' at the Volkswagen Arena, Istanbul, in December; he and Fazıl will be touring together as a duo in 2022-23.

**Performance:** Immensely popular in Turkey, Jamal returns there to give recitals with Fazıl Say and to perform concertos by Haydn and Shostakovich with the Istanbul, Izmir, Bursa, CSO, Eskisehir and Mersin Symphony Orchestras. Furthermore, collaborating with local musicians using traditional Turkish instruments is something that Jamal relishes and believes in very strongly. He has promoted these collaborations through the online release of traditional folk and classical music performances.

**Recordings:** In 2017, Jamal released his debut CD, 'Russian Masters', with pianist Anna Fedorova for Champs Hill Records. In September 2022, he released his duo album 'Tree of Life' with Fazıl Say and will record Say's 'Shahmaran' concerto with the Deutsche Symphony Orchestra in Berlin later in the 2022-23 season.

Jamal Aliyev performs on a 1700 Giuseppe Guarneri "filius Andreae" cello.



Jamal Aliyev is represented by Concert Artists Guild, New York, NY.

# Fazıl Say piano

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**Early Life & Education:** Fazıl had his first piano lessons from Mithat Fenmen, who had himself studied with Alfred Cortot in Paris. From 1987 onwards, Fazıl fine-tuned his skills as a classical pianist with David Levine, first at the Musikhochschule “Robert Schumann” in Düsseldorf, and later in Berlin. In addition, he regularly attended masterclasses with Menahem Pressler.

**Performances:** In the 2022-23 season, Fazıl will be a Focus Artist with the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich and Artist/Composer in Residence with the Staatskapelle Weimar. Fazıl has also appeared numerous times as a chamber musician. He has performed in a fantastic duo with violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja for years, and other prominent partners have included Maxim Vengerov, the Minetti Quartett, the Modigliani Quartet, Nicolas Altstaedt and Marianne Crebassa.



Photo credit: Marco Borggreve

**Recordings:** In autumn 2016, Warner Classics released Fazıl’s recording of Mozart’s Complete Piano Sonatas, for which Fazıl received his fourth ECHO KLASSIK in 2017. He then recorded the album “4 Cities” (2017), together with Nicolas Altstaedt. In autumn 2017, Warner Classics released Frédéric Chopin’s Nocturnes and the album “Secrets” featuring French songs, which Fazıl recorded together with Marianne Crebassa and for which he won the Gramophone Classical Music Award in 2018. His 2018 album is dedicated to Debussy and Satie, while his latest release “Troy Sonata – Fazıl Say Plays Say” features his own works. In January 2020, Fazıl’s recording of the complete Beethoven Piano Sonatas was released by Warner Classics.

**Awards & Prizes:** In 2013, Fazıl received the Rheingau Music Prize, and in December 2016, the International Beethoven Prize for Human Rights, Peace, Freedom, Poverty Alleviation and Inclusion in Bonn. In autumn 2017, he was awarded the Music Prize of the City of Duisburg.

Fazıl Say is represented by KD SCHMID Berlin, Germany.

# Program Notes

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## **Franz Schubert**

### **Sonata in A minor for Arpeggione and Piano D. 821**

Schubert's *Arpeggione Sonata* was composed in 1824 but only published in 1871 – long after the composer's death in 1828, and almost as long after the principal instrument for which it was written fell out of favour.

The six-stringed *arpeggione* was a kind of large bowed guitar that enjoyed a brief period of popularity after its invention in 1823 by the Austrian luthier Johann Georg Stauffer (1778–1853). It was fretted and tuned like a guitar, but held between the legs without a floor peg and played with a bow like the cello. Schubert may have been prompted to write a sonata for the instrument through his acquaintance with the Viennese arpeggione-player Vincenz Schuster. While the instrument still exists, its adepts are few in number and Schubert's sonata is mostly played nowadays in transcriptions for viola or cello.

The work opens with a memorable tune, more wistful than melancholy, in the home key of A minor, delivered with the direct simplicity that would later characterize the opening theme of the Schumann piano concerto in the same key. By a mixture of mincing steps and bold gestures we are led to the movement's principal glory: its toe-tapping second theme. Constructed out of a series of harmonic sequences and carefree leaps, this second theme is what a Happy Face emoticon would sound like, if it could sing. Playing it in subways and public squares could collapse the market for anti-depressants. It's the joyful music your dog hears in its head when running to fetch a ball for you. And while the development section spends much of its time in the minor mode, the underlying effervescence of its musical material keeps it from veering in a dark direction.

The *Adagio* second movement is hymn-like in its steady processional pace, with a Beethovenian earnestness of sentiment and a fireside warmth of tone that foreshadows Mendelssohn. It slows to a crawl at the end to provide a springboard for the moderately paced *Allegretto* finale that follows immediately on. The opening refrain theme of this rondo is so Brahmsian in its dignified pace and emotional restraint, one can almost hear the chorale theme from the finale of the Brahms First Symphony just waiting in the wings to be composed. The livelier contrasting episodes flicker in and out of the minor mode in a way that suggests Hungarian folk music, but the major achievement in this movement is the way in which Schubert creates contrast while maintaining an unflappable evenness of mood.

## **Fazıl Say**

### **Dört Şehir (Four Cities)**

#### **Sonata for Cello and Piano Op. 41**

Fazıl Say's Cello Sonata (2012) is a musical travelogue inspired by the composer's memories of four culturally rich cities in his native Turkey. It pays tribute to the layout of the traditional sonata with a melodically-focused first movement, an energetic scherzo-like second movement, a meditative slow movement and a playful finale.

The musical style of this sonata is much influenced by the folk music of the region, especially in its use of drone tones, irregular time signatures, ostinato rhythmic patterns and phrases constructed from the repetition of small melodic fragments.

The timbre of folk instruments such as the *kemençe*, a pear-shaped unfretted bowed instrument with a distinctive wailing tone, is evident in much of the writing for cello, as is the *saz*, a plucked long-neck lute used in Ottoman classical music. The piano, for its part, often provides harmonic fill for the cello's solo line but at other times becomes a purely percussive instrument, punching out disruptive Stravinsky-style rhythms either in dense clusters of tonal 'mud' or as quasi-pitch-less 'thumps' produced by muffling the piano strings with one hand while playing the keyboard with other.

*Sivas* is a city in central Turkey known for its conservative culture and large population of Alevis, a mystical sect of Islam. Inspiring this movement are the sad songs of the blind Alevi poet and songwriter Âşık Veysel (1894-1973), especially his song *Sazım* (My saz). The melancholy mood of this poet's music is well represented by the cello's sad recitative that ends the movement.

In *Hopa*, located in northeastern Turkey on the Black Sea coast, we arrive at a village wedding just as the dancing breaks out. The dance in question is the fast-paced *horon*, a line-dance in 7/8 time traditionally accompanied by the *kemençe*. Manically joyous as if inspiring acrobatic dance moves, this movement features explosive sonorities pulled from the extreme ranges of the keyboard and edgy hoe-down-type wailing from the cello.

*Ankara*, Fazıl Say's hometown, is the scene of mysterious ruminations pervaded by fragments and phrases of the famous Turkish patriotic anthem *Ankara'nın Taşına Bak* (Look at the stony road of Ankara) dating from the era of the First World War and the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1923).

In *Bodrum*, the "Turkish Saint-Tropez" so popular with tourists, we hear a quite different kind of music. Wandering from bar to bar in the town's busy streets we hear a kaleidoscopic variety of sounds, from swing jazz to popular songs. But what's this? Right at the end the piano and cello begin to argue, each aiming home truths at the other and spoiling for a fight. And that's our cue to leave the bar, taking our ears with us, as the first punch is thrown in the work's final notes.

### **César Franck** **Sonata for Cello and Piano in A major**

It will be a while yet before the *Huffington Post* is read by musicologists as a scholarly journal, and yet Alan Elsner, the Huff-Po reporter hot on the trail of breaking news in 19th-century Belgian music, is not wide of the mark in observing that:

There is a kind of breathless religious ecstasy to Franck's music – soaring themes; simple, pure harmonies; those ceaseless, swirling, gliding accompaniments. This, one feels, is truly the music of the angels. (29 Nov. 2011)

The work inspiring such shortness of breath and heady spiritual delirium in the intrepid journalist is, of course, Franck's *Sonata in A major for violin & piano*, a wedding present by the composer to the Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe. The sonata was in fact performed at the wedding in 1886 by Ysaÿe himself and a wedding-guest pianist. This setting of the sonata for the cello was created by cellist Jules Delsart, and was the only alternative version sanctioned by Franck.

The *Allegro ben moderato* first movement floats in a world of harmonic uncertainty. It opens with a number of dreamy piano chords, each followed by a simple chordal interval, as if giving the pitches to the instrumentalist, who then obliges by using them to create a gently rocking, barcarolle-like melody, the outline of which will infuse much of the work as a whole. This theme, played by the violin (or in this case, the cello) over a simple chordal accompaniment from the piano, builds in urgency until it can hold it no more, and a second theme takes centre stage in a lyrical outpouring of almost melodramatic intensity but ending in a dark turn to the minor. The violin will have none of it, however, and dreams both sleepwalkers back to the major mode for an amicable review of the two themes, both in the home key. The serenity of this movement results from its rhythmic placidness, often featuring a sparse, simple chordal accompaniment in the piano, and little rhythmic variation in the wandering pastoral 'de-DUM-de-DUM' triplets of the violin.

Where drama breaks out for real is in the *Allegro* second movement, one of the most challenging in the chamber repertoire for the pianist. This sonata-form movement bolts from the starting gate with a swirling vortex of 16ths in the piano, fretting anxiously over a theme in the mid-range that is soon picked up by the violin. Its worrisome collection of motives is based on the same small-hop intervals that opened the first movement, but reversed in direction and cast in the minor mode. A sunnier mood prevails in the second theme which, however, ebbs away as both instruments take stock of the ground covered in a sober interlude marked *Quasi lento*. The development section engages in a full and frank discussion of the two themes until the convulsive agitation of the opening theme returns in the recapitulation. Despite the

turbulence roiling at the heart of this movement, it manages to pull a major-mode ending out of a hat for its final cadence.

The slow third movement, a free-form meditation marked *Recitativo-Fantasia*, is bruised with the memory of the first movement's bliss. Its piano opening is almost a bitter parody of the sonata's very first bars. As this thematic material is brooded over, the violin tries to change the subject several times in distracted flights of fancy, but eventually agrees to join with the piano in a ruminative journey that passes through nostalgic reminiscence to end in heart-wrenching pathos. The searing intensity of the octave-leap 'wailing' motif at the end of this movement is the most profound moment in the sonata. No major-mode ending here.

All tensions are eased, all hearts healed, however, in a last-movement rondo that offers up a simple tuneful melody in continuous alternation with brief sections of contrasting material. This tune, so harmonically rooted as to suit being presented in strict canonic imitation (like a round), is shaped from the melodic outline of the theme that opened the sonata, bringing its cyclical journey full circle. Even the 'wailing' motif from the previous movement is recalled to the stage to give it, too, a happy ending.

British musicologist David Fanning got it right when he intuited the celebratory meaning beneath Franck's remarkable use of imitative counterpoint for the end of this "wedding present" sonata:

It is hard to resist reading this as a musical symbol of married bliss, especially when the dialogue is placed even closer together, at a distance of half a bar rather than a full bar, on the deliriously happy closing page.

Program notes by  
Donald G. Gíslason 2022

# Thank You!

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Presenting exceptional artists is made possible by the generosity of our supporters, who make the journey with us throughout the year.

COVID-19 has changed a great many things about the way in which we move through the world and interact with one another. Over the last couple of years, our supporters have sustained us in ways that we couldn't have imagined, and never have we been more grateful.

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