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FALL CONCERTS 2022

Randall Goosby violin

Zhu Wang piano

Sunday November 27 2022

From the Artistic Director

Dear Friends:

I'm delighted to welcome you to the last concert of our incredible collection of Fall 2022 performances: violinist Randall Goosby and pianist Zhu Wang.

I was in the audience at Merkin Hall in New York when Randall played his First Prize winning performance at the finals of the Young Concert Artists International Auditions in 2018. He is a talented and captivating young artist.

Zhu Wang was also a winner at the YCA Auditions in 2020, however the pandemic prevented me from being there in person.

I would like to thank the Vancouver Recital Society's Board of Directors for generously sponsoring this performance, and the Annaliese Soros Educational Residency Fund of Young Concert Artists for its assistance in sending Randall and Zhu to play for students at Killarney Secondary School in addition to their VRS performance.

We are most grateful to our Season Sponsor, the Peak Group of Companies, for its stellar support, and to the Estate of Edwina and Paul Heller and RBC's Emerging Artists Program for their support of our "Next Gen" performers. And a big thanks as well to the City of Vancouver and the Province of British Columbia for their support.

It's a wonderful program that Randall and Zhu have put together for us and I hope you enjoy the afternoon.

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，谢谢您的合作。

Program

Randall Goosby violin

Zhu Wang piano

Sunday November 27 2022 3:00 pm

Vancouver Playhouse

LILI BOULANGER (1893–1918)

Deux Morceaux

Nocturne

Cortège

(approx. 5 minutes)

MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1936)

Violin Sonata No. 2 in G major

Allegretto

Blues. Moderato

Perpetuum mobile. Allegro

(approx. 18 minutes)

WILLIAM GRANT STILL (1895–1978)

Suite for Violin and Piano

African Dancer. Majestically – Vigorously

Mother and Child. Slowly and expressively

Gamin. Rhythmically and humorously

(approx. 16 minutes)

INTERMISSION

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

**Violin Sonata No. 9 in A major Op. 47
(Kreutzer)**

Adagio sostenuto – Presto

Andante con variazioni

Finale. Presto

(approx. 38 minutes)

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Randall Goosby violin

Early Life & Education: A graduate of The Juilliard School, Randall continues his studies there, pursuing an Artist Diploma under Itzhak Perlman and Catherine Cho. Randall is an active chamber musician and has spent his summers studying at the Perlman Music Program, Verbier Festival Academy and Mozarteum Summer Academy.

Performances: Recent performances include debuts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Gustavo Dudamel at the Hollywood Bowl, Baltimore Symphony under Dalia Stasevska, Detroit Symphony under Jader Bignamini, London Philharmonic Orchestra and Philharmonia Orchestra.

Recordings: Randall's debut album for Decca, titled *Roots* (2021), is a celebration of African-American music which explores its evolution from the spiritual through to present-day compositions. It features three world-premiere recordings of music written by African-American composer Florence Price, and includes works by composers William Grant Still and Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson, plus a newly commissioned piece by acclaimed double bassist Xavier Foley, a fellow Sphinx, Perlman Music Program and Young Concert Artists alumnus.



Photo credit: Kaupo Kikkas

Awards & Prizes: Randall was First Prize Winner in the 2018 Young Concert Artists International Auditions. In 2019, he was named the inaugural Robey Artist by Young Classical Artists Trust in partnership with Music Masters in London, and in 2020 he became an Ambassador for Music Masters, a role that sees him mentoring and inspiring students in schools around the United Kingdom.

Did you know: Randall plays a 1735 Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù on generous loan from the Stradivari Society.

Randall Goosby is represented by Young Concert Artists New York, NY

Zhu Wang piano

Early Life & Education: Zhu started learning piano at the age of five in Hunan, China. He is a graduate of the Music Middle School affiliated with the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, where he studied with Zhe Tang and Fou Ts'ong. He received a Bachelor of Music degree from The Juilliard School, where he was also the recipient of the Gina Bachauer and Mieczyslaw Munz Scholarships. Zhu is currently pursuing his post-baccalaureate diploma at the Curtis Institute of Music, under the tutelage of Robert McDonald. He gratefully acknowledges the support of the Bagby Foundation for the Musical Arts.

This Season: During the 2022-23 Season Zhu will make appearances at the Usedom Music Festival (Germany), Caramoor as part of the Evnin Rising Stars Series, and will give recital and chamber music performances with Chamber Music Detroit, Hamilton College, Music at Dumbarton Oaks, Howland Chamber Music Series, Chesapeake Music, Buffalo Chamber Music Society, Clarion Concerts, and The Morgan Library & Museum. He will also join the Columbus Symphony in performances of Rachmaninoff's 2nd piano concerto.



Photo credit: Jiyang Chen

Performances: An active chamber musician and champion of new music, Zhu performed the world premiere of American composer Timo Andres' *Moving Études* on his national tour. Zhu's festival appearances include the Music Academy of the West, Four Seasons Winter Workshop, Kneisel Hall Chamber Music Festival, International Piano Academy Lake Como, PianoTexas International Festival & Academy, Shanghai International Music Festival, Music Fest Perugia, and Amalfi Coast Music and Arts Festival in Italy.

Awards & Prizes: Zhu was awarded First Prize in the 2020 Young Concert Artists Susan Wadsworth International Auditions. He also won First Prize at the 2nd Zhuhai International Mozart Competition for Young Musicians, 4th Manhattan International Music Competition, and Hilton Head Young Artist Piano Competition.

Zhu Wang is represented by Young Concert Artists New York, NY

Program Notes

Lili Boulanger Deux Morceaux

Lili Boulanger was born into a distinguished family of French musicians. Her grandfather, Frédéric Boulanger (b. 1777) had been a professor at the Paris Conservatoire and was married to Marie-Julie Halignier (1786-1850), a mezzo-soprano at the Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique who had sung in the premiere of Donizetti's *La Fille du Régiment* in 1840. Lili's father, Ernest Boulanger (1815-1900), was also a professor at the Conservatoire and a composer of numerous comic operas, having won the prestigious Prix de Rome award at the age of only 19.

But perhaps the most famous and influential member of the family was Lili's sister, the musical pedagogue Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979), whose students included some of the leading composers, arrangers and performers of the 20th century, including Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, Philip Glass, Burt Bacharach, Quincy Jones, Dinu Lipatti and Astor Piazzola, to name but a few.

Lili, a musical prodigy like her father, won the Prix de Rome in 1913, the first woman ever to do so. But whatever musical gifts she might have received by family inheritance, they did not extend to her physical health. An early case of bronchial pneumonia when she was a child, and the Crohn's disease which she later developed, left her severely immunocompromised and in frail health throughout her short life. She died at the age of 24 in 1918, the same year as Debussy.

Virtually all of her surviving compositions date from the period 1910-1918, her *Deux Morceaux* for violin or flute being composed in 1911 and 1914 respectively. In these pieces she displays an interest in the finely nuanced tone colours typical of French impressionism.

The nighttime stillness of *Nocturne* is conveyed in the lulling drone of its slow-moving harmonies, underpinned with long-enduring pedal tones in the bass that shift harmonic interest to the delicately nuanced tone colours of the upper voices. These pedal tones echo up and down through three octaves of the texture to swaddle the piece's thoughtful, wandering melody in a warm harmonic glow throughout.

Just before the end, connoisseurs of all things Debussy will no doubt notice a sly quotation from *The Afternoon of a Faun*, prompting an exchange of raised eyebrows and knowing glances with their fellow Debussyists sitting nearby.

Cortège is more buoyant in mood, its title indicating not a funeral procession but rather a joyous parade. Its four-square phrases, jaunty syncopated rhythms and happy-go-lucky melody make it the ideal tune to hum while strutting arm-in-arm in chummy company down a *boulevard* in Paris, twirling one's walking stick or umbrella while taking in the sights of the city.

Maurice Ravel Violin Sonata No. 2 in G major

The *Violin Sonata No. 2 in G major*, composed between 1923 and 1927, was Ravel's last chamber work, and its austere style of instrumental writing contrasts strongly with the lush textures of his previous works for chamber ensemble. Gone are the full keyboard sonorities and great sweeping washes of harmonic colour that characterize, for example, the *Piano Trio* of 1914. Instead, we hear a much thinner, more linear texture, with one or two single-line voices in the keyboard part accompanying the violin's solo line. Ravel sets out to emphasize even further the difference in sound colour between piano and violin by his frequent use of *bitonality*, i.e., writing in two keys at once.

The sonata comprises three contrasting movements, composed in widely different styles but linked by a shared use of musical material. The first movement *Allegretto* is in a free sonata form. Its first theme is announced by the piano as a wandering melody in an exotically chromatic version of G major, soon joined

by two important sub-motives: a cheeky bitonal 'chirp' in F# major (while the violin is in G major) and a colourful rainbow of parallel major triads in the whole-tone scale.

The second theme area chimes like a clock announcing the hour in groupings of even long notes within a small range, each chiming note sounding out a kind of 'fractured' octave, just a semitone short of a consonance. In this section the texture is starkly thin, bone-bare and spare, the piano accompanying the melodic musings of the violin with a virtual 'no comment' of open 5ths.

The development section ruminates over all this material, eventually whipping itself into a froth of excitement to climax in a flurry of violin tremolo until calm returns once again with the serene arrival of the opening theme. The recapitulation sees melodic activity slow to a crawl as the various musical motives that animated the movement disappear into a sonic vapour in the upper register of both instruments.

The second movement, entitled *Blues*, reflects Ravel's keen interest in the new currents of jazz arriving in France from the United States in the 1920s. This movement is a French stylized version of American blues music, with its characteristic syncopations, 'bent' pitches imitated by glissando slides in the violin and 'blue' notes, i.e., flattened 3rds and 7ths, along with some honky-tonk style rhythmic moves from the piano. Playing 'straight man' to all this stylish chatter is a constant ostinato of quarter notes, begun by the violin in pizzicato as the movement opens, then taken over by the piano, playing in both G major and A-flat major at the same time.

The 3rd movement *Perpetuum mobile* is a breathless whirlwind of violin figuration in a steady stream of 16th-note busy-banter that puts the violin in the centre spotlight for its entire length. But like a car that needs a few key-turns in the ignition to get going, it starts up slowly before taking off like a buzzing bee. In the course of its travels this movement revisits many of the musical motives of previous movements, including the first movement's little 'chirping' figure (which opens the movement), its rainbow of parallel whole-tone triads, its many open 5ths and its 'fractured' octaves – as well as a few passing references to the flattened 7ths of the *Blues* movement. Listeners familiar with Ravel's *Piano Concerto in G major* will be pleased to hear hints of that work's exuberant last movement in the finale of this violin sonata.

William Grant Still

Suite for Violin and Piano

Composer, conductor and arranger William Grant Still was an important figure in the Harlem Renaissance, an intellectual and cultural movement centred in New York between the two World Wars that gave a voice to the African-American identity in the arts. The grandson of slaves, he studied composition at the Oberlin Conservatory and privately with French composer Edgar Varèse. He later went on to receive three Guggenheim Fellowships, the last of these in 1939, when his music was performed daily at the New York World's Fair – although he was not able to attend the Fair to hear it without police protection, except on "Negro Day".

His creative output comprises nearly 200 works, including nine operas, five symphonies, and numerous art songs, as well as chamber music and solo instrumental works. Known as the "Dean of Afro-American Composers", he was a patriarchal figure in Black American music in the early part of the 20th century. His *Afro-American Symphony* was the most widely performed symphony by any American composer up until 1950.

His *Suite for Violin and Piano* (1943) is in three movements, each inspired by a work of visual art from the Harlem Renaissance period. "When I was asked to compose a suite for violin and piano," he wrote, "I thought of three contemporary Negro artists whom I admired and resolved to try to catch in music my feeling for an outstanding work by each of them."

The first movement takes its inspiration from a sculpture entitled *African Dancer*, a writhing nude by sculptor Richmond Barthé (1901-1989) that conveys the strength and muscular vitality of the dancing African body under the influence of music.

The composer's melodic gifts are on full display in the second movement, inspired by a number of paintings and sculptures each entitled *Mother and Child* created by Sargent Johnson (1887-1967) in the 1920s and

1930s. This lyrical and soulful lullaby, with its gentle syncopations and constant wavering between major and minor, encapsulates the complex emotions of maternal love.

The final movement in the suite is based on the bust of a small child entitled *Gamin* by sculptor Augusta Savage (1892-1962). Light-hearted and carefree, it evokes an age – long past – when small children were allowed to play in the streets to fashion as much mischief and mayhem as their little minds could devise.

Ludwig van Beethoven

Violin Sonata No. 9 in A major Op. 47 (Kreutzer)

Beethoven's 'Kreutzer' Sonata is a monument in the violin repertoire, remarkable for its unusual length and for the technical demands it places on both violinist and pianist. The wilful juxtaposition of its three oddly disparate movements may perhaps have been motivated by the equally odd circumstances of its rushed composition.

In 1803, the violinist George Bridgetower (1778-1860), a musical prodigy of mixed Polish & West Indian parentage, had arrived in Vienna and been introduced to Beethoven by his patron Prince Lichnowsky. A concert date was set for them to appear together, for which Beethoven hurriedly wrote two sonata movements to precede a finale movement in A major that he had originally intended for his Op. 30 No. 1 violin sonata. Relations between the two musicians were exceptionally cordial, by all accounts, to the point that Beethoven even allowed himself to tease his bi-racial violinist colleague with a jocular inscription atop his manuscript of the sonata that reads: "Mulatto sonata, composed for the mulatto Brischdauer [i.e., Bridgetower], a great madman and a mulatto composer."

But relations later soured between the two, for reasons unknown, and Beethoven changed the dedication of the sonata, devoting it instead to the celebrated French violinist Rodolphe Kreutzer (1766-1831), who apparently found the work unintelligible and was not known ever to have performed it in public.

When the sonata was published in 1805, its title page bore an inscription referencing its unusual characteristics that read: "written in a very concertante style, almost like a concerto." The grand style in this 'concerto-like' work is evident in the sonata's epic proportions and display-oriented virtuoso figurations, in the first two movements especially.

* * *

The work opens with an *Adagio sostenuto* slow introduction, as if it were the first movement of a symphony. The opening bars, however, are played by the violin alone, in multiple stops, as if to proclaim and display the skill of the violinist right from the outset. The piano then re-states violin's A-major musings but in A minor, establishing a dark suspenseful tone in what follows. But suspense is not the only thing happening here. Over and over the motive of a rising semitone gets repeated and repeated in small two-note phrases, in what will become a kind of motto for the succession of themes in this movement.

When the pace quickens to *Presto* with the introduction of the first theme, a series of strutting quarter notes in A minor, it begins with this rising semitone. The second theme, a slow chorale-like tune, begins with it as well, while the first phrase of the closing theme in E minor is virtually nothing *but* a series of rising-semitone two-note gestures. Gluing the exposition together is a succession of muscular passagework figurations rumbling and rambling over wide swathes of the keyboard that seem aimed at filling the ear with as much piano sound as possible. In writing this sonata for his violinist duo partner Beethoven makes sure the audience knows who it is who is making him sound so good.

These same textures are used intensely throughout the development section as it spirals through key after key until Beethoven prepares for the arrival of the recapitulation in a series of dramatic pauses, each followed by coy hints – and many rising semitone gestures – that the first theme is in the wings ready to emerge, which of course it eventually does. Not satisfied with his forthright review of previous material, however, Beethoven adds a beefy coda that toys with bringing the movement to an end several times before it rushes clattering to a final emphatic cadence in A minor.

The second movement *Andante* presents an expansive theme followed by four variations and a coda. Supported by the simplest of harmonies, the theme carries a gentle lilt from frequent off-beat syncopations

in the melodic line, while numerous trills in both the violin and piano parts prepare us for the series of ‘frilly’ variations that follow.

First honours are given to the piano in a texture rife with trills and mordents twinkling atop a pattern of triplet 16ths outlining the basic harmonies of the theme. The second variation gives pride of place to the violin in a constant stream of repeated-note chatter over an oom-pah accompaniment in the piano. The obligatory *minore* variation comes next, slip-sliding through the notes of the minor scale in a turgid series of chordal harmonies that change on every 16th note. Variation IV returns to the major mode to create the most embellished thematic variant of all, featuring real and written-out trill figures in the upper register connected by thrilling chromatic runs. In this variation we can hear already the composer’s interest in creating walls of pure sound with trills, a fascination he will explore in later works such as the finales of the Waldstein Sonata Op. 53 and the Piano Sonata in C minor Op. 111.

The *Presto* last movement presents Beethoven with the problem of how to get the listener’s ear from the F major tonality of the variation movement to the A major tonality of the finale. The rough-and-ready solution he arrives at couldn’t be simpler: a sonic sledgehammer. He just comes crashing down with a massive two-fisted A major chord in the piano, extending sonorously over four octaves, and the job is done. F major? What F major? We’re in A major now.

This last movement – the one that Beethoven had already written when he assembled this sonata for his concert appearance with George Bridgetower in 1803 – is a buoyant sonata-form finale with a much lighter, more transparent texture. The heavy saturated sonorities of the two previous movements are nowhere to be found, replaced instead by the joyous interplay of individual melodic lines tossed merrily between the instruments in a relentless chatter of lively dialogue. Its two principal themes, the first introduced in a kind of fugato at the beginning of the movement, are both infected with the toe-tapping rhythm of the *tarantella*. And while Beethoven in a pair of short *Adagio* sections in the coda tries to convince you that things are moving too fast and need to slow down, in the end there is no denying the momentum that has built up, and the movement rushes to its concluding cadence with the hilarious inevitability of an inflated beach ball falling down stairs.

Program notes by
Donald G. Gíslason 2022

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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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201-513 Main Street
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V6A 2V1

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