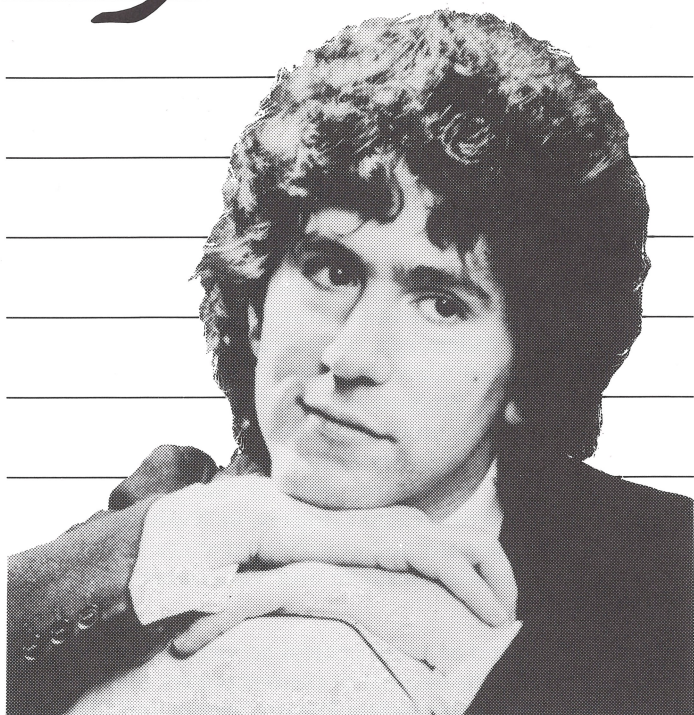


9<sup>th</sup> SEASON  
1988 – 1989



# STEVEN ISSERLIS

• CELLO •

RENA SHARON • Piano •

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Sunday, March 12, 1989

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Vancouver Playhouse

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In co-operation with CBC Radio



Meet the Artists .....

## Steven Isserlis

In describing the young British cellist, Steven Isserlis, *Strad Magazine* said "Steven Isserlis fully deserves the superlatives which are so regularly heaped on every aspect of his playing. He is a performer whose effortless technical brilliance and musical sensitivity are so well married that it would be misleading to talk about them separately". He is widely regarded as one of the finest young cellists in Europe, and his unique sound is due in part to the fact that he plays on gut strings. His cello is a 200 year old Guadagnini.

Steven Isserlis was born in London in 1958. His grandfather, Julius Isserlis was a Russian pianist of note, and both his sisters are musicians. He studied with Jane Cowan at the International Cello Centre in London and later in the US at Oberlin College.

He has appeared with all the major British orchestras and has performed recitals and participated in chamber music at all the important British Festivals including Bath, Aldeburgh, as well as Edinburgh. Recital and concerto performances abroad have included Salzburg, Vienna, Frankfurt, Munich, Amsterdam, Israel, Finland and the USSR, where he will return for a third tour later this year. His increasingly busy schedule in the United States has included performances at Avery Fisher Hall in New York, the Piatigorsky Memorial Recital in Baltimore, and, at the invitation of Mstislav Rostropovich, in the first World Cello Congress in Washington DC. A sought-after chamber music participant he has appeared at the Festivals of Spoleto, Prussia Cove, Kuhmo, Seattle, Santa Fe and Vancouver where he was first heard in 1987.

Steven Isserlis has recorded to great critical acclaim on the EMI, Hyperion, and Virgin Classics labels. His interest in contemporary music has led several composers to write for him, including Robert Saxton and David Fanshawe. He gave the first British performance of Kabalevsky's 2nd Cello Concerto, and his wide-ranging repertoire includes his own arrangements for cello and piano of pieces by Beethoven, and many neglected 19th Century works which include pieces for the cello by Liszt, Anton Rubinstein and Balakirev.

A great favourite of Vancouver Chamber Music Festival audiences, Steven Isserlis is heard tonight in his Vancouver Recital debut. The concert is being recorded for broadcast at a later date on CBC Stereo's *Arts National* (FM 105.7)

## Renée Simmons

### ARTISTS MANAGEMENT

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## Rena Sharon

Born in Montreal, Rena Sharon studied at the Eastman School of Music, at Indiana University, and was a Piano Fellow at the Tanglewood Festival. Her piano teachers were Menahem Pressler and Gyorgy Sebok, and she has coached with such musical luminaries as Josef Gingold, Janos Starker, Hans Hotter, Erik Werba and Jorg Demus.

She has performed extensively as accompanist throughout Canada, the United States and Europe, and she has recorded for Canadian and European radio and on disc. She has been a member of the Gabriel Quartet and recently won the award for "Best Pianist" at the International Voice Competition of Rio de Janeiro. Later this year she will appear at the Seattle Chamber Music Festival.

Ms Sharon has been a member of the faculties of Oklahoma State University, the Music Academy of the West, and was Head of the Accompanying Department at the Victoria Conservatory. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Accompaniment and Song Literature at the University of British Columbia School of Music.

Rena Sharon was heard on this series last season when she appeared with violist, Paul Neubauer.

## PROGRAM

**Suite in C major**  
*BWV 1009 (c. 1720)*

**Johann Sebastian Bach**  
(1685 — 1750)

*Prelude • Allemande • Courante • Sarabande • Bourrée I • Bourrée II • Gigue*

Listeners who heard Steven Isserlis's Vancouver debut (at the second Vancouver Chamber Music Festival) will well remember his very distinct approach to Bach's unaccompanied cello suites. In contrast to what Andrew Porter once called the "American Conservatory" style, Isserlis has assimilated aspects of historical performances to present a fresh range of string colours especially appropriate to these landmark works. As near as scholars can tell, Bach composed all of the cello suites during his employment by the prince of Cothen, a six-year period when he focused on secular instrumental works.

**Sonata (1941)**

**Bohuslav Martinu**  
(1890 — 1959)

*Allegro*  
*Largo*  
*Allegro commodo*

Martinu, a figure of 18th-century productivity, somehow managed to combine the verve and general good humour of Czech folk music with the sophistication and wit of French Neo-Classicism. While only a handful of his works are solidly in the repertoire, their rhythmic drive, unique approach to polytonal counterpoint, and surefire effectiveness make them increasingly popular with performers and audiences alike.

## Intermission

**Pohadka (Fairytale) (1910, rev. 1923)**

**Leos Janacek**  
(1854 — 1928)

*Con moto*  
*Con moto-adagio*  
*Allegro*

Now that long overdue local productions of *The House of the Dead* and *The Cunning Little Vixen* have brought Janacek's magnificent stage works to the attention of Vancouver audiences, it's time for more performances of his equally original chamber works. Janacek wrote only one duo sonata *per se*, but the "**Fairy-Tale**" is of comparable weight. In his study of Czech music Vladimir Stepanek notes that Janacek is "essentially a programmatic composer," whose music "is a document of his personal artistic rebellion."

## Sonata in A major (1886)

Cesar-August Franck  
(1822 — 1890)

*Allegro ben moderato*

*Allegro*

*Recitativo ben moderato*

*Fantasia: Allegretto poco mosso*

Franck's one and only **Violin Sonata** can be read as the quintessential example of late French romanticism — an ever popular concert work now appearing in arrangements for cello and (alas!) even flute. Like virtually all of Franck's handful of popular works, the **A major Sonata** is a hybrid combining Wagnerian chromaticism, Lisztian pyrotechnics and *fin de siècle* sentimentality — a showy, even melodramatic essay in the cyclic sonata format (an overall design where the separate movements are thematically interrelated).

Program notes by David Duke.

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The Vancouver Recital Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Government of British Columbia through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Recreation and Culture; the City of Vancouver, and the Leon and Thea Koerner Foundation.

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The Vancouver Recital Society's Hamburg Steinway is maintained and serviced by Johann B. Krebs.

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## Next Concert

Sunday, April 16, 1989

## KAZUHITO YAMASHITA, Guitar

Variations on a Theme of Mozart, Op. 9 ..... Fernando Sor

Sonata No. 3 for Unaccompanied Violin

BWV 1005 (arr. Yamashita) ..... J.S. Bach

Nocturnal, Op. 70 ..... Benjamin Britten

Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95

"From the New World"

(arr. Yamashita) ..... Antonin Dvorak