Saturday, May 12, 2018, at 7:30 pm

Virtuoso Recitals

Sol Gabetta, Cello
Bertrand Chamayou, Piano

BEETHOVEN  Sonata in F major for cello and piano, Op. 5, No. 1 (1796)
   Adagio sostenuto—Allegro
   Rondo: Allegro vivace

BRITTEN  Cello Sonata in C major, Op. 65 (1960–61)
   Dialogo
   Scherzo-pizzicato
   Elegia
   Marcia
   Moto perpetuo

Intermission

CHOPIN  Sonata in G minor for cello and piano, Op. 65 (1845–46)
   Allegro moderato
   Scherzo: Allegro con brio
   Largo
   Finale: Allegro

CHOPIN/FRANCHOMME  Grand Duo on themes from Meyerbeer’s Robert le diable (1831)

Please make certain all your electronic devices are switched off.

This performance is made possible in part by the Josie Robertson Fund for Lincoln Center.

Steinway Piano
Alice Tully Hall, Starr Theater
Adrienne Arsht Stage
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Public support is provided by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

Endowment support for Symphonic Masters is provided by the Leon Levy Fund.

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**UPCOMING GREAT PERFORMERS EVENTS:**

**Sunday, May 13 at 11:00 am in the Walter Reade Theater**

Christina and Michelle Naughton, pianos

RAVEL: Ma mère l’oye (“Mother Goose Suite”) for piano four hands

JOHN ADAMS: Roll Over Beethoven

CHOPIN: Rondo in C major for Two Pianos

LUTOSŁAWSKI: Variations on a Theme by Paganini

**Saturday, May 19 at 7:30 pm in Alice Tully Hall**

Freiburg Baroque Orchestra

Kristian Bezuidenhout, fortepiano and director

HAYDN: Symphony No. 74 in E-flat major

MOZART: Piano Concerto No. 17 in G major

JOHANN CHRISTIAN BACH: Symphony in G minor

MOZART: Piano Concerto No. 9 in E-flat major (“Jeunehomme”)

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*We would like to remind you that the sound of coughing and rustling paper might distract the performers and your fellow audience members.*

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By David Wright

This program celebrates the cello repertoire with three great composers and three of the leading cellists of their time. The cello-playing King Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia was not one of his era’s best cellists, but he employed someone who was: Jean-Pierre Duport, a pioneer in raising the instrument from mere accompanist to a powerfully expressive solo instrument. Visiting the royal court, the young Beethoven composed two masterful sonatas for himself and Duport to perform—in fact, the first sonatas in history to treat the piano and cello as equal partners.

In the 1960s, at the height of the Cold War, friendships between Western musicians and those in the U.S.S.R. weren’t easy to form, but when Benjamin Britten met the Soviet cellist and conductor Mstislav Rostropovich, the two men bonded immediately. Britten’s highly expressive Cello Sonata, one of several products of that relationship, consists of five concise movements with descriptive titles: Dialogo, Scherzo-Pizzicato, Elegia, Marcia (i.e., march), and Moto Perpetuo.

One of the first friends that the 21-year-old Chopin made after moving from Warsaw to Paris was Auguste Franchomme, a cellist just two years older. Together, the two musicians whipped up a Grand Duo on themes from Robert le diable, Giacomo Meyerbeer’s hugely popular grand opera. Near the end of Chopin’s short life, he composed several works in a visionary new style for him, including the Cello Sonata, Op. 65, dedicated “à son ami A.J. Franchomme.” Chopin and Franchomme performed excerpts of the sonata in 1848 at Chopin’s last public concert.

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By David Wright

**Sonata in F major for cello and piano, Op. 5, No. 1 (1796)**

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

*Born December 16, 1770, in Bonn, Germany*

*Died March 26, 1827, in Vienna*

**Approximate length: 25 minutes**

In the winter and spring of 1796, the young Beethoven visited Prague, Dresden, Leipzig, and Berlin with his friend and patron Prince Lichnowsky. He stayed about a month in Berlin, getting to know the leading musicians there and appearing several times at the court of King Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia, an enthusiastic cellist. For these occasions, Beethoven composed two sonatas, later published as his Op. 5, for himself to perform with Jean-Pierre Duport, the king’s teacher and principal cellist of the court orchestra. Rather than overtax the royal attention span with a long Adagio, Beethoven composed each sonata in just two movements: a sonata-form Allegro (with slow introduction) and a Rondo finale.

By this time, the 54-year-old Duport (together with his younger brother Jean-Louis, who may have actually been the first to perform these sonatas) had already done much to liberate the cello from its old role as an accompanying instrument. “In his hands,” a French reviewer had written in 1762, “the instrument is no longer recognizable; it speaks, expresses and renders everything with a charm greater than that thought to be exclusive to the violin.” Beethoven was always attracted to virtuoso players of unusual instruments; for Duport, he wrote nothing less than history’s first true duo sonatas for cello and piano—that is, music in which the two instruments’ parts are equally important and fully written out. More remarkably still, he wrote with such assurance and understanding of the medium that these works sound like the product of a mature classical tradition, rather than the novelty items they were.

**Cello Sonata in C major, Op. 65 (1960–61)**

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

*Born November 22, 1913, in Lowestoft, England*

*Died December 4, 1976, in Aldeburgh, England*

**Approximate length: 20 minutes**

Before he met cellist Mstislav Rostropovich in 1961, Benjamin Britten had composed no significant solely-instrumental works for ten years. A series of such pieces followed that meeting, including five for cello, beginning with this sonata.
By 1961, when Schoenberg’s 12-tone method dominated the new-music scene, to compose a “Sonata in C major” was a conservative act indeed, although coming from so fresh an imagination as Britten’s, it was hardly a reactionary one. The piece’s form—five movements, with characteristic titles instead of mere tempo markings—refers as much to the chamber works of Bartók as to 18th-century suites and divertimenti. As for the tonality, the tuning of the cello’s strings, with C being the lowest note, points naturally to C major and its related keys.

Britten opens the sonata with a Dialogo, where the dialogue is not only between the two instruments but between two themes—one a nervous two-note semitone phrase, the other an ascending and descending scale motive. In the ensuing movements, Britten derives all his themes from these two, starting with the Scherzo, a sped-up parody of the orderly first movement. In its intense climax and pervasive sense of loss, the Elegia foreshadows the Britten masterpiece that immediately followed this sonata, the War Requiem. So do the military rhythms and trumpet calls of the grotesque Marcia, with a tip of the hat to the satirical music of Rostropovich’s compatriots Prokofiev and Shostakovich. Another transformation of the scale theme provides the material for the brilliant finale, which, for all its “perpetual motion,” is recognizably in rondo form.

Sonata in G minor for cello and piano, Op. 65 (1845–46)
FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN
Born March 1, 1810, in Zelazowa Wola, Poland
Died October 17, 1849, in Paris

Approximate length: 33 minutes

Soon after arriving in Paris from Warsaw in 1831, Chopin befriended another young musician, the cellist Auguste Franchomme, and collaborated with him in performances and even in composition (as we hear later in this program). Their friendship proved durable; at Chopin’s last public concert, at the Salle Pleyel in Paris on February 16, 1848, Franchomme joined him in the first performance—an incomplete one, lacking the first movement—of the Cello Sonata, Op. 65, dedicated by the composer “à son ami A.J. Franchomme.”

Chopin had done little with the sonata genre for most of his career, preferring to compose briefer Romantic character pieces such as nocturnes and ballades. But in two late works, the Cello Sonata and the Piano Sonata in B minor, Op, 58, he spoke a more abstract musical language that makes these sonatas seem both more Classical in form and startlingly modern in utterance.

Hearing the piano’s solo in the Cello Sonata’s opening bars, for example, one remembers the respectful youth of 19 who composed the two piano concertos, with their endless formal orchestral expositions. But what happens next is the latest word from Chopin: a sudden piano flourish, an enigmatic pause at the
cello’s entrance, and finally a highly malleable treatment of the theme, driven by the cello’s emotional energy into distant harmonic regions. An exquisite theme made of descending chromatic scales provides the needed contrast.

The Scherzo is a beguiling combination: the coltishness and Polish fire of the piano concertos tempered by the irony and economy of the mature Chopin. The Largo is a remarkable miniature, created almost entirely from repetition of one phrase in ever-shifting harmonic guises. The Finale subjects two themes—one tarantella-like, the other more saturnine—to continuous development before unleashing the vigorous G-major coda.

Grand Duo on themes from Meyerbeer’s Robert le diable (1831)
FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

AUGUSTE FRANCHOMME
Born April 10, 1808, in Lille, France
Died January 21, 1884, in Paris

Approximate length: 12 minutes

In November 1831, Giacomo Meyerbeer’s new grand opera Robert le diable scored a smash hit in Paris. Music publishers rushed to market arrangements and new compositions featuring favorite melodies from this latest operatic sensation. Although he had been in Paris only a few months, Chopin was apparently already the go-to composer for such items. “Schlesinger,” he wrote to a Warsaw friend, “has hired me to write something on themes from Robert, which he has bought from Meyerbeer for 24,000 francs.” The “something” turned out to be a tuneful, showy piece in several sections for cello and piano, which Chopin and his friend, the cellist Franchomme, worked out together. At least four of the opera’s catchy melodies get a good airing, punctuated by flourishes for each instrument, in the course of a slow introduction and sections marked Andantino, Allegretto, and (briefly) Andante cantabile.

David Wright, a music critic for New York Classical Review, has provided program notes for Lincoln Center since 1982.

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Sol Gabetta

Following highly acclaimed debuts with the Berlin Philharmonic and Simon Rattle at the Baden-Baden Easter Festival, at Lincoln Center’s Mostly Mozart Festival, and at the opening of the 2016 BBC Proms, Sol Gabetta returns this season to the Vienna Philharmonic, Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Bamberg Symphony, and Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. She tours extensively in Europe with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra and in the U.K. with Sinfonieorchester Basel. She also returns to the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and, with longtime recital partner Bertrand Chamayou, performs at Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Philharmonie Luxembourg, and elsewhere. Ms. Gabetta will be artist in residence with the Orchestre National de Lyon and the 2018 Kissinger Sommer Festival, where she performs the festival’s opening concert with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen and Paavo Järvi, followed by a chamber music recital with Janine Jansen and Alexander Gavrylyuk. She also opens the 2018 Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival with the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester and Christoph Eschenbach. Chamber music is at the core of Ms. Gabetta’s work, and she continues to draw inspiration from a wide circle of collaborators and musical encounters at the Solsberg Festival, which flourishes under her artistic direction.

Ms. Gabetta was honored in 2018 with the Herbert von Karajan Prize at the Salzburg Easter Festival. She has also been recognized with multiple Echo Klassik awards—most recently in 2016, when she was named Instrumentalist of the Year for her interpretation of Pēteris Vasks’s Cello Concerto No. 2. A Grammy Award nominee, she also received the Gramophone Young Artist of the Year Award (2010) and the Würth-Preis of the Jeunesses Musicales (2012), as well as commendations at Moscow’s Tchaikovsky Competition and the ARD International Music Competition in Munich. She continues to build her extensive discography with Sony, the most recent release being a live recording of cello concertos by Elgar and Martin with the Berlin Philharmonic and Simon Rattle/Krzysztof Urbański.
Ms. Gabetta performs on a cello by Matteo Goffriller from 1730, Venice, provided by Balthazar Soulier. She has been teaching at the Basel Academy of Music since 2005.

**Bertrand Chamayou**

With his mastery of an extensive repertoire, pianist Bertrand Chamayou appears regularly in venues such as the Théâtre des Champs Elysées, Munich’s Herkulessaal, and London’s Wigmore Hall. He has appeared at major festivals including Lincoln Center’s Mostly Mozart Festival, the Lucerne Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, Rheingau Musik Festival, Beethovenfest Bonn, and Klavier-Festival Ruhr.

Highlights of the 2017–18 season include his debuts with the New York Philharmonic under Semyon Bychkov, Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra, Bamberg Symphony, Staatskapelle Berlin, Atlanta and Detroit Symphony Orchestras, and Orchestre symphonique de Québec. Further highlights include his return to Orchestre National de Belgique, Orquesta Nacional de España, Orchestre de Paris, and Orchestre National de France. He performs as a soloist on tour in South America with the Orchestre Nationale du Capitole de Toulouse.

Mr. Chamayou has worked with orchestras including the London and Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestras, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln, NHK Symphony Orchestra, and Danish National Symphony Orchestra. Recent highlights include his celebrated debut with the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, Seattle Symphony Orchestra, Accademia di Santa Cecilia, and Cleveland Orchestra. Mr. Chamayou is a regular chamber music performer, with partners including Renaud and Gautier Capuçon, Quatuor Ebène, Antoine Tamesit, and Sol Gabetta. He opened the season at London’s International Piano Series and has recitals at Wigmore Hall, Kissinger Sommer, Nottingham Lakeside Arts, as well as appearances in Monte Carlo, Vilnius, Essen, and at Salzburg’s Easter Festival.

Mr. Chamayou’s recordings include a Naïve CD of music by César Franck, which was awarded several accolades including Gramophone’s Editor’s Choice. In 2011 he celebrated Liszt’s 200th anniversary with a recording of the complete Années de Pèlerinage (Naïve). The only artist to win France’s prestigious Victoires de la Musique on four occasions, Mr. Chamayou has an exclusive recording contract with Warner/Erato and was awarded the 2016 Echo Klassik for his recording of Ravel’s complete works for solo piano.
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