

# YO-YO MA

Sunday, March 5, 2017, 7 pm



Photo: Jason Bell

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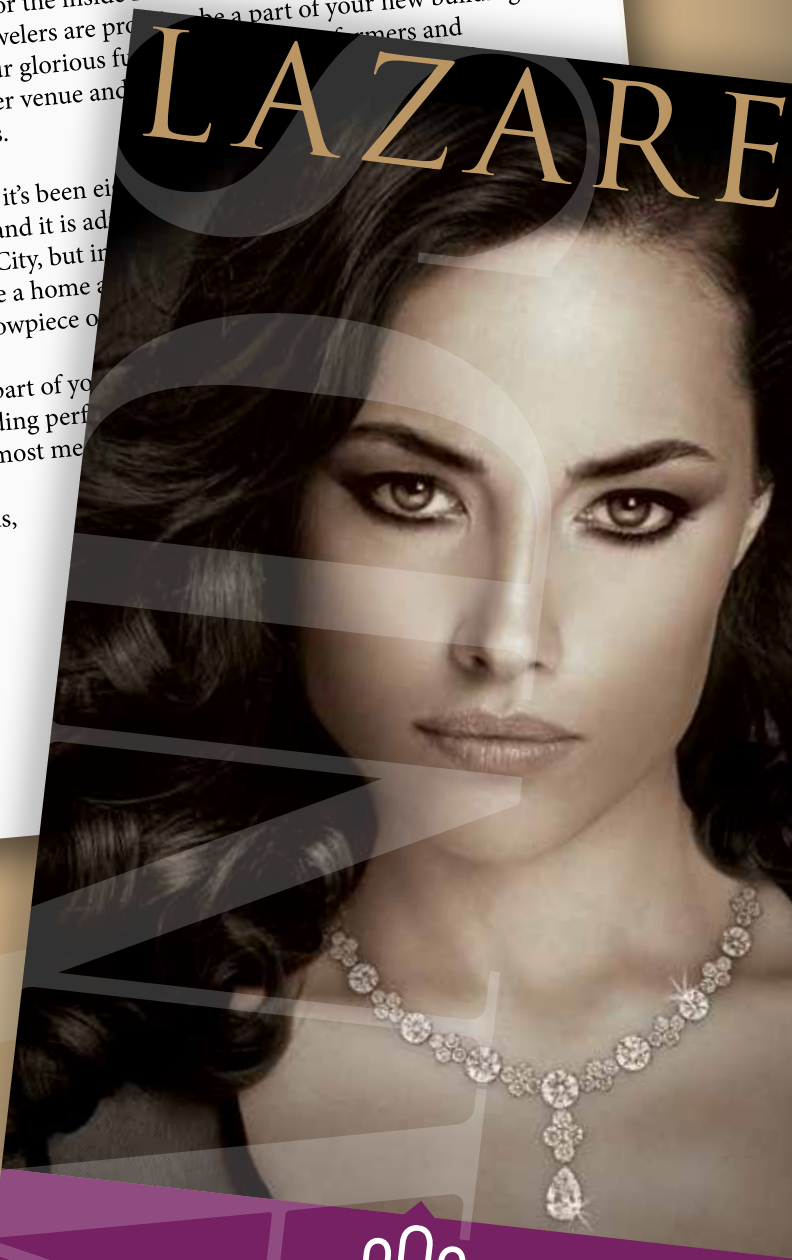
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# YO-YO MA

## CELLO

*Appalachia Waltz*

Mark O'Connor  
(b. 1961)

Suite No. 1 in G Major, BWV 1007

Johann Sebastian Bach  
(1685 - 1750)

Prélude  
Allemande  
Courante  
Sarabande  
Menuett  
Gigue

Allegretto, from Partita for Cello Solo, Op. 31

Ahmed Adnan Saygun  
(1907 - 1991)

Suite No. 5 in C Minor, BWV 1011

Johann Sebastian Bach

Prélude  
Allemande  
Courante  
Sarabande  
Gavotte  
Gigue

## INTERMISSION

Sonata for Solo Violoncello

George Crumb  
(b. 1929)

Fantasia  
Tema Pastorale con variazioni  
Toccata

Suite No. 3 in C major, BWV 1009

Johann Sebastian Bach

Prélude  
Allemande  
Courante  
Sarabande  
Bourrée  
Gigue



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# ABOUT THE ARTIST

Yo-Yo Ma's multi-faceted career is testament to his continual search for new ways to communicate with audiences, and to his personal desire for artistic growth and renewal. Whether performing new or familiar works from the cello repertoire, coming together with colleagues for chamber music or exploring cultures and musical forms outside the Western classical tradition, Mr. Ma strives to find connections that stimulate the imagination.

Yo-Yo Ma maintains a balance between his engagements as soloist with orchestras throughout the world and his recital and chamber music activities. He draws inspiration from a wide circle of collaborators, creating programs with such artists as Emanuel Ax, Daniel Barenboim, Kayhan Kalhor, Ton Koopman, Yu Long, Edgar Meyer, Mark Morris, Cristina Pato, Kathryn Stott, Chris Thile, Michael Tilson Thomas, Wu Man, Wu Tong, and Damian Woetzel. Each of these collaborations is fueled by the artists' interactions, often extending the boundaries of a particular genre. One of Mr. Ma's goals is the exploration of music as a means of communication and as a vehicle for the migration of ideas across a range of cultures throughout the world. To that end, he has taken time to immerse himself in subjects as diverse as native Chinese music with its distinctive instruments and the music of the Kalahari bush people in Africa.

Expanding upon this interest, in 1998, Mr. Ma established Silkroad, a nonprofit organization that seeks to create meaningful change at the intersections of the arts, education, and business. Under his artistic direction, Silkroad presents performances by the acclaimed Silk Road Ensemble and develops new music, cultural partnerships, education programs, and cross-disciplinary collaborations. Silkroad's ongoing affiliation with Harvard University has made it possible to develop programs such as the Arts and Passion-Driven Learning Institute for educators and teaching artists, held in collaboration with the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and a new Cultural Entrepreneurship initiative in partnership with Harvard Business School. More than 80 new musical and multimedia works have been commissioned for the Silk Road Ensemble from composers and arrangers around the world.

Through his work with Silkroad, as throughout his career, Yo-Yo Ma seeks to expand the cello repertoire, frequently performing lesser known music of the 20th century and commissions of new concertos and recital pieces. He has premiered works by a diverse group of composers, among them Elliott Carter, Richard Danielpour, Osvaldo Golijov, Leon Kirchner, Zhao Lin, Christopher Rouse, Giovanni Sollima, Bright Sheng, Tan Dun, John Williams, and Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky. On March 9, 2017, he will premiere a new concerto by Esa-Pekka Salonen with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

As the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant, Mr. Ma is partnering with Maestro Riccardo Muti to provide collaborative musical leadership and guidance on innovative program development for The Negaunee Music Institute of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and for Chicago Symphony artistic initiatives. Ma's work focuses on the transformative power music can have in individuals' lives, and on increasing the number and variety of opportunities audiences have to experience music in their communities. In March 2016, he was appointed Artistic Advisor at Large to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as part of their expansive initiatives honoring the centenary of JFK's birth and to encourage the idea of creative citizenship.

Yo-Yo Ma is strongly committed to educational programs that not only bring

young audiences into contact with music but also allow them to participate in its creation. While touring, he takes time whenever possible to conduct master classes as well as more informal programs for students – musicians and non-musicians alike. At the same time, he continues to develop new concert programs for family audiences, for instance helping to inaugurate the family series at Carnegie Hall. In each of these undertakings, he works to connect music to students' daily surroundings and activities with the goal of making music and creativity a vital part of children's lives from an early age. He has also reached young audiences through appearances on *Arthur*, *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* and *Sesame Street*.

Mr. Ma's discography of over 100 albums (including 18 Grammy Award winners) reflects his wide-ranging interests. He has made several successful recordings that defy categorization, among them *Appalachia Waltz* and *Appalachian Journey* with Mark O'Connor and Edgar Meyer, and two Grammy-winning tributes to the music of Brazil, *Obrigado Brazil* and *Obrigado Brazil - Live in Concert*. Mr. Ma's recent recordings include: *The Goat Rodeo Sessions*, with Edgar Meyer, Chris Thile and Stuart Duncan, which received the 2013 Grammy for Best Folk Album, and *Songs from the Arc of Life*, with pianist Kathryn Stott. His most recent release, *Sing Me Home*, recorded with the Silk Road Ensemble, was released in April 2016 as the companion album to documentary film *The Music of Strangers*. Created by Oscar-winning producer Morgan Neville, the film follows the Ensemble's more than 50 musicians, composers, visual artists and storytellers as they explore the ways art can both preserve traditions and shape cultural evolution. In spring 2017, Mr. Ma will release and tour *Bach Trios*, recorded with Edgar Meyer and Chris Thile. Mr. Ma remains one of the best-selling recording artists in the classical field. All of his recent albums have quickly entered the *Billboard* chart of classical best sellers, remaining in the Top 15 for extended periods, often with as many as four titles simultaneously on the list.

Yo-Yo Ma was born in 1955 to Chinese parents living in Paris. He began to study the cello with his father at age four and soon came with his family to New York, where he spent most of his formative years. Later, his principal teacher was Leonard Rose at the Juilliard School. He sought out a traditional liberal arts education to expand upon his conservatory training, graduating from Harvard University in 1976. He has received numerous awards, including the Avery Fisher Prize (1978), the Glenn Gould Prize (1999), the National Medal of the Arts (2001), the Dan David Prize (2006), the Leonie Sonning Music Prize (2006), the World Economic Forum's Crystal Award (2008), the Presidential Medal of Freedom (2010), the Polar Music Prize (2012), and the Vilcek Prize in Contemporary Music (2013). In 2011, Mr. Ma was recognized as a Kennedy Center Honoree. Appointed a CultureConnect Ambassador by the United States Department of State in 2002, Mr. Ma has met with, trained, and mentored thousands of students worldwide in countries including Lithuania, Korea, Lebanon, Azerbaijan, and China. He also serves as a UN Messenger of Peace. He has performed for eight American presidents, most recently at the invitation of President Obama on the occasion of the 56<sup>th</sup> Inaugural Ceremony.

Mr. Ma and his wife have two children. He plays two instruments, a 1733 Montagnana cello from Venice and the 1712 Davidoff Stradivarius.

For additional information, see: [www.yo-yoma.com](http://www.yo-yoma.com), [www.silkroadproject.org](http://www.silkroadproject.org), and [www.opus3artists.com](http://www.opus3artists.com).

# PROGRAM NOTES

## **Appalachia Waltz**

Mark O'Connor (b. 1961)

Mark O'Connor's classical compositions have been influenced by the American roots music he has performed throughout his career. O'Connor won national championships in fiddle, mandolin, and flat-pick guitar while still in his teens. Named Country Music Association musician of the year for six years in a row, he was frequently heard on recordings by Nashville artists in the 1990s. O'Connor has played not only country music and bluegrass, but also jazz with the David Grisman Quintet and rock-jazz fusion with The Dregs. He recently founded the O'Connor Band with members of his family. Its 2016 recording, *Coming Home*, received a Grammy nomination for Best Bluegrass Album. O'Connor has also become known as a pedagogue, infusing string education with American styles through his method books.

*Appalachia Waltz* was composed by O'Connor for violin in 1993 and arranged for string trio on the 1995 album that he recorded with Yo-Yo Ma and bassist Edgar Meyer. The composer later used the nostalgic melody in his *Americana Symphony*. Influenced by Scandinavian and Appalachian fiddling, the piece is representative of both the composer's and the cellist's willingness to cross musical boundaries. O'Connor has stated, "If I play 'Appalachia Waltz' for any fiddler, they'll say it sounds classical. If I play it for any classical violinist, they'll say it sounds like a fiddle or folk tune." More delicate in character than fiddling, *Appalachia Waltz* is, according to O'Connor, "supposed to sound simple and innocent," though this belies the virtuosity required to perform it. Ma hears the work's double stops and contrapuntal textures as related to "a Baroque sound... that openness of sound but incredibly expressive."

## **Suites for Violoncello**

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)

Even for an era in which musicians were considered to be little more than servants, Johann Sebastian Bach's job as organist at Weimar ended badly. When he requested to be released, the Duke flatly refused and had him imprisoned for almost a month before allowing his departure. Bach was better paid in his new position as Kapellmeister for Prince Leopold, and his six years working at the court in Cöthen were productive ones. With a staff of eighteen musicians, he was able to compose many instrumental works, including sonatas and concertos, two orchestral suites, the first book of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, the *Brandenburg Concertos*, the Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin, and the six Suites for solo cello.

Much mystery surrounds the origins of the Cello Suites. Probably created around 1720 or perhaps earlier, they may have been composed for one or more of the musicians in the court orchestra, such as viola da gambist Christian Ferdinand Abel or cellist C. B. Linike. No autograph manuscript of the Suites survives, though four copies from the period are extant, including one in the hand of the composer's wife, Anna Magdalena Bach, dating from a decade or so later.

Bach relied on the standard dances that make up the core of the Baroque suite: the German allemande, the French courante, the Spanish sarabande. To this he added a Prelude evoking a player's improvisatory utterances before the dances proper begin, perhaps best exemplified by the Prelude to the third Suite, and an additional pair of French dances in the penultimate slot: minuets, bourrées, or gavottes. The Suites close with the usual, sometimes rollicking gigue. In spite of their expected forms, Bach's Suites are unprecedented, as other works for solo cello were not produced until later in the century. In their technical demands—the leaping bowing, double stops, and chordal writing that articulate the underlying



harmonies of an otherwise melodic texture—they are more in keeping with the writing for violin of the period. In a historic sense, Bach's Cello Suites are the fountain from which the later solo cello works on tonight's program spring.

### **Allegretto, from Partita for Cello Solo, Op. 31**

Ahmed Adnan Saygun (1907 - 1991)

Ahmed Adnan Saygun was the best known member of a group of composers described as the Turkish Five. In 1928, he won a contest sponsored by the Education Ministry that allowed him to leave his career as a school teacher to study composition in Paris. He returned to Turkey in the 1930s and taught in conservatories in Ankara and Istanbul. Saygun came to represent the modernization of Turkey and its coming to prominence in the classical musical world. Two of his operas produced at the Ankara Halkevi Theatre in 1934 were among the first operas by Turkish composers. When his oratorio, *Yunus Emre*, was conducted by Leopold Stokowski at the United Nations in 1958, *New York Times* critic Howard Taubman described Saygun as "forging a style of his own."

In 1936 Saygun traveled with ethnomusicologist and composer Béla Bartók to collect folk song in Anatolia; he later published a book about this music. Saygun's ethnomusicological research brought him acclaim, but it also helped inspire his compositions, which combine traditional Turkish folk music with a classical style. One such work, the Partita, op. 31, was composed in 1954. It was commissioned by theater director Max Meinecke for Istanbul's German Consulate General. The first performance, played by Martin Bochman, marked the 150th anniversary of the death of Friedrich Schiller, and Saygun dedicated the work to the German poet. Yo-Yo Ma's interest in this work stems from his involvement with the Silk Road Ensemble, which he founded to bridge Eastern and Western musics, and his recording of the somber yet dance-like yet Allegretto movement appears on their album, *A Playlist Without Borders*.

### **Sonata for Solo Violoncello**

George Crumb (b. 1929)

While in graduate school, George Crumb studied Spanish and German in hopes of studying abroad. His chance came while he was a doctoral student at the University of Michigan, when a Fulbright allowed him to study at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin. Here in 1955 he composed his Sonata for Violoncello, which was awarded the BMI prize in composition the following year. Dedicated to the composer's mother, the Sonata received its premiere after Crumb returned to Ann Arbor in 1957, performed by a fellow student, Camilla Doppman. The Sonata is cast in a neoclassical style drawing on Baroque idioms. Because it is not typical of the more experimental works on which Crumb's reputation was later established, the composer wanted to remove his Sonata from circulation, but as it was already published, he was convinced not to.

In the opening Fantasia, dissonant pizzicato chords alternate with motivic fragments that gradually evolve into extended melodies; the center of the movement is a cadenza-like climax of double stops, collapsing into the low register before the return of opening material. The "pastoral" theme of the second movement's variations resembles a siciliano, with lilting rhythms in a two-part form. The first two variations feature running figures and rapid pizzicatos; the figuration of the passionate third variation subtly recalls Baroque ornamentation. In the virtuosic Toccata, melodies leap in upward arpeggiation to evoke the gestures of a player's fingers flying across a keyboard. Double stops and syncopated rhythms flavor the middle of the movement before its racing finish.

*Marian Wilson Kimber is Associate Professor of Musicology in the School of Music.*

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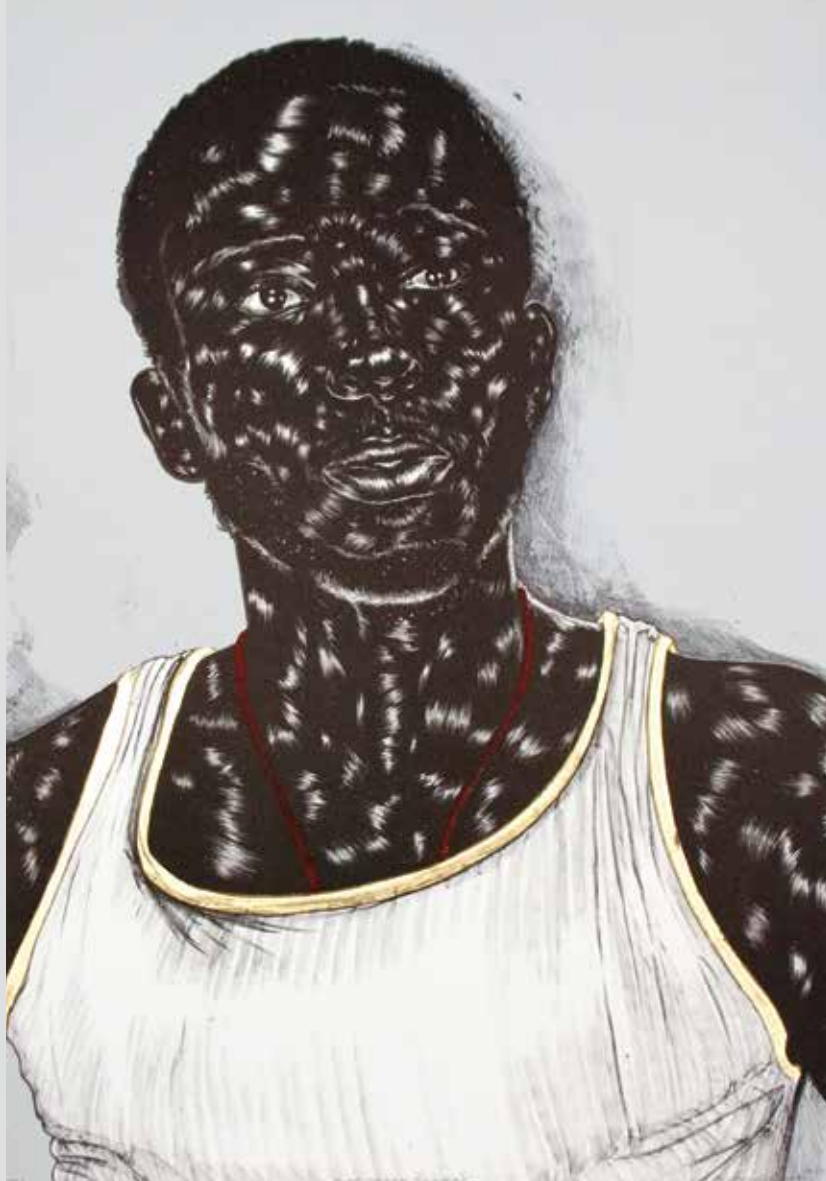


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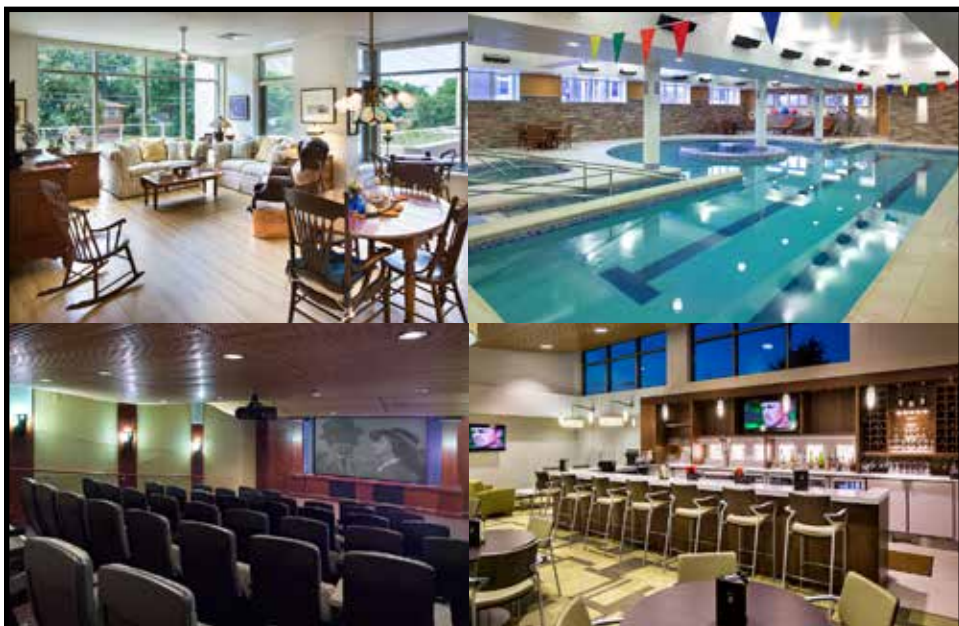
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3/6

- 3/6 The Hancher Guild Youth Art Show  
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- 3/8 Hancher Culinary Arts Experience: Oasis
- 3/9 Las Cafeteras
- 3/23 Jessica Lang Dance
- 3/25 The Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra
- 3/27 Leslie Odom Jr.
- 3/30 Dr. David J. Skorton
- 4/4 Reading by Kelly Link - FREE
- 4/4 Andrew Bird and My Brightest Diamond



3/27



3/30

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