

UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA

MCINTIRE DEPARTMENT of

music

presents

A Distinguished Major Recital

Chris Fox
cello

Saturday, April 1, 2023

1:00 pm

Old Cabell Hall

University of Virginia

*This recital is supported by the
Charles S. Roberts Scholarship Fund.*

Established in 2004 by the generosity of Mr. Alan Y. Roberts ('64)
and Mrs. Sally G. Roberts, the Charles S. Roberts Scholarship Fund
underwrites the private lessons and recital costs for undergraduate music
majors giving a recital in their fourth year as part of a
Distinguished Major Program in music.

Recital Program

Cello Suite No. 6 in D Major, BWV 1012 Johann Sabastian Bach
I. *Prelude* (1685-1750)
II. *Allemande*
III. *Courante*
IV. *Sarabande*
V. *Gavotte I & II*
VI. *Gigue*

Married Life from “Up” Michael Giacchino
arr. Chris Fox
Roseland String Quartet

Come on Eileen Dexys Midnight Runners
arr. Chris Fox
Roseland String Quartet

Passacaglia for violin and cello Johan Halvorsen
(1864-1935)
Britney Cheung, *violin*

~ Intermission ~

Cello Sonata No. 3 in A Major, Op. 69 Ludwig van Beethoven
I. *Allegro ma non tanto* (1770-1827)
II. *Allegro Molto*
III. *Adagio Cantabile – Allegro Vivace*
Deke Polifka, *piano*

About the Performers



Chris Fox is a fourth-year student double majoring in Commerce with Finance and Information Technology concentrations, and Music with a concentration in Performance. Chris grew up in McLean, Virginia, and began playing cello when he was nine years old. When he graduates this spring, Chris will be working with Reference Point, a financial consulting firm in McLean. He also plans to continue playing cello with local orchestras in the DC metro area.

At UVA, Chris studies under Professor Adam Carter and performs regularly with the Charlottesville Symphony and Radio Music Society. He was also part of various chamber ensembles throughout college, as well as UVA's Baroque Ensemble for two years. He has performed with the Trans-Siberian Orchestra at JPJ Arena, played at church services at St. Paul's Memorial Church, and participated in the Music Department's Messiah Sing-In. Last year, Chris joined UVA Professor Daniel Sender and fellow music students on a trip to Hungary where they performed at the University of Pécs.

Outside of performance, Chris works for the Music Department as a social media intern. He is also part of The University Fellowship, an Episcopal student group. In his free time, Chris enjoys going out to eat with friends, reading fantasy novels, playing ultimate frisbee, and hanging out with Fisher, his Labrador retriever.

Chris's favorite music memory at UVA is performing a fourth-year showcase recital with his string quartet, Roseland, in February.



Britney Cheung is a fourth-year student studying Political and Social Thought, and Economics. Originally from Hong Kong, she started playing the violin at three years old and has since performed in youth orchestras and chamber music festivals throughout Asia and the New England area. At UVA, Britney studies with Daniel Sender and is involved in chamber music. In her free time, she enjoys watching movies, improvising recipes, and taking pictures of food.



Alex Taing is a fourth-year student studying Computer Science in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences. Originally from Richmond, he grew up watching and playing alongside the Richmond Symphony. Inspired by them, he began playing with local youth ensembles. Since coming to UVA, Alex has found a passion for playing chamber music. He also enjoys arranging, and performing pop songs in string quartets as a part Radio Music Society. After graduation, he will relocate to DC to pursue a career in tech.



Isabelle Lesmana is a recently graduated student from the College of Arts and Sciences, having studied Neuroscience and Music. She is from Annandale, VA, has played at concert venues such as Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center, and is a member of the Radio Music Society, along with her own small private viola studio. She is passionate about epilepsy research and will pursue a PhD in neuroscience at UCLA in the fall. Her hobbies include playing with her cat, drinking bubble tea, and listening to beep boop music.



Deke Polifka serves as Director of Music & Organist at St. Paul's Memorial Church (Episcopal) in Charlottesville, and is Musical Director of the Virginia Consort. He also serves as Assistant Conductor and Accompanist for the University Singers and Chamber Singers at The University of Virginia.

A Virginia native, Deke lived in Colorado for eleven years where he was Organist and Choirmaster at Grace and St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Colorado Springs and Assistant Conductor and Accompanist of The Colorado Vocal Arts Ensemble. An active performer, he has presented organ recitals in venues such as the National Cathedral in Washington, DC, and has appeared with orchestra for performances of Barber's Toccata Festiva, the Poulenc Concerto and organ symphonies by Widor and Guilmant.

Deke holds degrees in piano performance from The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, where he also studied organ, voice, and choral conducting. He later earned an Artist Diploma in Organ Performance from The University of Denver. In 2013, he spent a summer sabbatical in France, playing many of the significant instruments in and around Paris and studying French organ repertoire with Marie-Louise Langlais. Deke is an Associate of the American Guild of Organists (AAGO) and has served in various leadership positions for that organization and for the Association of Anglican Musicians.

Program Notes

Of the six suites **Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)** wrote for unaccompanied cello, **Suite No. 6, BWV 1012** is arguably his most magnificent. Its technical difficulty, improvisational passages, and joyous character require performers to stretch their artistry to the maximum to showcase the cello's capabilities.

The Sixth is Bach's only suite that calls for "a cinq cordes," a five-string instrument, which freed Bach to write music that soars beyond the period's typical cello register. Five-string cellos are now obsolete, leaving today's cellists to perform the Suite on a four-string instrument which significantly exaggerates technical demands for the performer, especially awkward shifts.

Bach's original score does not survive today, and even the most accurate copies of the Suites lack expressive markings. Cellists, therefore, have discretion over articulations, dynamics, and embellishments, making the Suites deeply personal.

Suite No. 6 is comprised of six Baroque dance movements: a *Prelude*, *Allemande*, *Courante*, *Sarabande*, two-part *Gavotte*, and *Gigue*. The *Prelude* is characterized by a perpetual, jaunty 12/8 rhythm that gradually ascends to stratospheric regions of the cello. It is highly virtuosic, with rapid string crossings and high shifting. The *Allemande* is the longest and most improvisatory movement in all six suites. Bach employs small note values (thirty-second and sixty-fourth notes) to formally notate what sounds like spontaneously conceived ornamentation. The *Courante* ("running" in French) is set in a fast tempo with simple rhythms that sometimes displace downbeats. The movement spans nearly three octaves with continuous sixteenth notes that fly up and down the instrument. The *Sarabande* is one of the most challenging movements due to its extensive use of double stops (playing multiple notes at once), but its rich harmonies make it a sublime moment in the Suite. The *Gavottes* are played as a pair and are some of the most dance-like movements. Broad chords lend themselves to *Gavotte I's* courtly character, which sounds like a buoyant, formal dance. *Gavotte II* is distinctly rustic and folk-like in character, including a prolonged bass pedal that mimics the sound of a small French bagpipe called a musette. Finally, the *Gigue* exhibits the widest character range in the Sixth Suite – bold and jubilant one instant, and longing and subdued the next. There are moments in the *Gigue* that harken back to the *Prelude's* rhythmic structure and bowing, bringing a sense of symmetry that ultimately unifies the movements at the conclusion of the cycle.

Johan Halvorsen's (1864-1935) Passacaglia was composed in 1894 and is a close replica of the final movement of George Frederic Handel's Keyboard Suite in G Minor, HWV 432, written nearly two hundred years earlier. A passacaglia is a dance characterized by its perpetually repeating bass line. Though the underlying harmony remains the same, passacaglias are engaging because of their variations on every repetition.

Halvorsen uniquely adapted Handel's Passacaglia (originally for harpsichord) as a virtuosic showcase for two string instruments, usually featuring violin and cello. Halvorsen was a violinist himself, in addition to being an active composer, conductor, and professor during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Halvorsen's Passacaglia contains 20 variations, each consisting of four measures. The opening theme and the first three variations that follow it begin much like Handel's harpsichord suite, with the cello mimicking the bass of the harpsichordist's left hand, while the violin copies the melody of the right hand. Marked 'fortissimo,' the character is dramatic and forthright, with accents on the violin's downbeats. It is not until variation 4, however, that Halvorsen's own voice truly emerges from the original keyboard work.

Variation 4 begins a gradual *accelerando* (speeding up), which persists into variations 11 and 12, some of the most wild and exciting in the piece. Variation 13 dramatically pulls back to *andante* (moderately slow), allowing space for the excitement to build once again towards the finale. An explicit *accelerando* is marked in variation 19 and grows into the epic variation 20 that concludes the piece. These tempo changes are not present in Handel's original.

In addition to tempo, Halvorsen makes the Passacaglia his own by masterfully showcasing the violin and cello. Handel's original would have been performed on a harpsichord, which, unlike a piano, is extremely limited in terms of dynamics, articulations, and timbre. By adapting the piece for two string instruments, Halvorsen had greater flexibility of expression. For example, he calls for various extended techniques - those used to obtain unusual sounds - like ponticello, artificial harmonics, and ricochet.

Halvorsen also takes advantage of how string instruments can produce different articulations and dynamics - some variations are played smooth and softly, others short and loud, while others are a different combination entirely. Halvorsen often marks a new articulation or dynamic level on repeats, none of which are present in the original.

Handel's Suite ends in a minor key, but, as if reaffirming the Passacaglia as his own, Halvorsen concludes his adaptation with a Picardy third (when a piece in a minor key ends with a major chord). Typically associated with happiness and triumph, the final major chord is an appropriate conclusion

to the flashy and dramatic character that Halvorsen not only captured, but magnified with two string instruments. The beauty and originality of Halvorsen's Passacaglia illustrates why he is considered one of the most influential Norwegian composers.

Ludwig van Beethoven's (1770-1827) Cello Sonata No. 3, Op. 69 is historically significant not only for its enduring popularity, but also because it was the first sonata to feature the cello and piano as equals. Prior to Beethoven's third sonata, the cello traditionally served as an accompanying "obligato" (obligatory, yet subordinate) instrument. Notably, Beethoven's dedication of Sonata No. 3 substitutes the word "obligato" with the phrase "Grande Sonate pour Pianoforte et Violoncello" ("Grand Sonata for Piano and Cello") to explicitly elevate the cello's status.

Beethoven himself played piano for the Sonata's first performance in January, 1809. This was a particularly important period during Beethoven's life, often labeled by historians as his middle or "heroic" period. Beethoven was growing increasingly deaf, and he struggled with suicidal thoughts as he contemplated a world without sound. Despite his troubled health, this was a highly productive period in Beethoven's life when many of his most popular works came to fruition – drafts of Cello Sonata No. 3 were found among sketches of the Fifth Symphony and Violin Concerto, and all of these compositions characterize the period in Beethoven's career when he pushed the boundaries of classicism and asserted a more individualized style.

As if to announce a departure from period customs and his earlier cello sonatas, Beethoven begins the opening *Allegro Ma Non Tanto* with five bars of unaccompanied cello that sublimely state the primary theme from which the rest of the movement develops. The presentation of this theme has an improvisational nature that underscores the cello's new-found prominence. Beethoven also establishes instrumental equality in the sharing of melody – each theme in the first movement's exposition is evenly split between cello and piano, developing a dialog between the instruments through the exchange of solo and accompanying roles. Such thematic repetition is used throughout each of the remaining movements.

The second movement's humorous and relentless *Scherzo* is far removed from the first movement's elegant character, especially its syncopated rhythms and jabbing downbeats in the opening piano solo. Beethoven masterfully finds a balance between cello and piano in the opening climax with a dramatic restatement of the first theme in unison. The rest of the movement continues to highlight the virtuosic abilities of the cello, such as double-stopped melodies and shifts into high positions.

The *Adagio Cantabile* functions as a moment of relaxation that seamlessly drifts into the final movement without pause. Similar to the second movement, the piano introduces the main theme, this time accompanied by a heartfelt cello countermelody that beautifully entwines itself with the piano's gesture. The *Allegro Vivace* that follows the third movement best exemplifies the cello's capabilities as a dominant chamber instrument. The cello begins with a subdued melody that gains momentum and volume, harkening back to the first movement's opening. Also similar to the first movement, themes are traded off in an equal dialogue between the instruments. High shifting, fast passage work, double stops, and sudden dynamic and articulation changes are all characteristic of this movement, reinforcing the cello's virtuosity.

Acknowledgements

First, thank you Professor Adam Carter for four great years of instruction, mentorship, and friendship. I always left my lessons feeling I knew how to improve, and you broadened the way I will approach music for the rest of my life. I am happy to say that I will leave UVA as a significantly better cellist than when I arrived. It has been a pleasure to study under you and to get to know you and your cats.

I would also like to thank UVA's other string performance faculty members, especially Professors Daniel Sender, Ayn Balija, and David Sariti, for coaching me in masterclasses, chamber rehearsals, baroque orchestra, and more. I now feel much more confident in my ability to rehearse and perform in a group setting, as well as how to push my performances to the next level.

Thank you to Professor Elizabeth Ozment, my DMP advisor, for the extremely generous amount of time and effort you put into this recital program. You went well above the call of duty, especially purchasing books for research and bringing me coffee for our meetings. I cannot thank you enough for your dedication.

To my guest performers, Britney Cheung, Alex Taing, Isabelle Lesmana, and Deke Polifka, thank you so much. I have performed with all of you throughout college and I am so thankful you could join me on this special day.

Thank you to Alex Christie and the student workers who are live-streaming today's performance. Thank you also to Marcy Day for your support and kindness, and to Connor Noble and Khuyen Dinh for your excellent photos.

Thank you also to all of my past mentors and music teachers, especially to Ruth Donahue, my first cello teacher, and John Moran, who taught me throughout high school.

To all of my friends, thank you for your constant support and our fun times together. I would not have put on a recital without you. Most of all, thank you to my Mom and Dad, and to my siblings, Peter, Caroline, and Ellie, for always supporting me and putting up with my complaining and many hours of ear-scratching practice. I love you all very much and I'm so glad you could be here today.

Distinguished Major Program

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