

“Aspetto la notte” (“I am waiting for the night”)

Jonathan Swensen, cello
Marianna Shirinyan, piano
2027-2028 Season

Maurice Ravel: *Pièce en forme de habanera*, for cello and piano

Dobrinka Tabakova: *Whispered Lullaby*, for cello and piano

Johannes Brahms: Sonata No. 2 in F major, Op. 99

Intermission

Bent Sørensen: *Aspetto la notte*

Johannes Brahms: Sonata No. 1 in E minor, Op. 38

Maurice Ravel: “Kaddish” from *Deux mélodies hébraïques*

Ravel’s *Habanera* opens the program with elegance, its beautifully singing lines shaped by the gentle pulse of the dance. Tabakova’s *Whispered Lullaby* offers a brief moment of quiet intimacy before Brahms’s F-major Sonata brings the first half to a powerful close with its lyricism and expressive richness.

After intermission, Sørensen’s *Aspetto la notte* (Waiting for the Night), commissioned by Jonathan Swensen, introduces a sound world of stillness and poetic expression, gently leading into the “night” of Brahms’s E-minor Sonata, which closes the evening with its limitless lyricism, refined structural clarity, and a final movement that echoes the craft of Bach.

We conclude this reflective program of darkness, drama, and whisper with a prayer: Ravel’s “Kaddish,” returning us to the composer of the opening piece in a different light and setting. Throughout this program, you will discover countless connections that, to us, symbolize the circularity and infinity of music—and of life itself.

JONATHAN SWENSEN, cello

2027–28 Season

Solo Program to be selected by the Artist from the following works:

J. S. Bach: any of the first five *Suites for Unaccompanied Cello* (20' to 28')

Benjamin Britten: *Suite for Solo Cello*, No. 1 (22')

Henri Dutilleux: *Trois Strophes sur le nom de Sacher* (10')

Zoltán Kodály: *Sonata in B Minor for Solo Cello*, Op. 8 (35')

György Ligeti: *Cello Sonata* (10')

Bent Sørensen: *Farewell-Fantasia for Solo Cello* (8')

Paul Wianko: *First Suite for Solo Cello* (14')

Sørensen's *Farewell-Fantasia for Solo Cello* was written specifically for Jonathan Swensen and first performed on August 14, 2021, at the inaugural Schackenberg Music Festival in Denmark. Sørensen writes in a recognizably tonal, late-Romantic style—indeed, in the *Farewell-Fantasia* there are clear allusions to the world of Bach's Cello Suites—though typically with off-key harmonic interjections and the use of glissandi, thereby creating a dreamlike and unstable atmosphere.

Bent Sørensen writes of his piece: "*Farewell-Fantasia*—my little piece for solo cello—is definitely a fantasia. It consists of small sections, small movements in one, and between the lines there seems to be traces of a non-existent Bach suite. I am still not sure what the 'farewell' is all about: there is no specific farewell in the piece but maybe a certain general sadness. For me, the piece is even more a 'welcome' than a 'farewell.' A very nice welcome to work with the young, brilliant, and dedicated cellist, Jonathan Swensen, to whom my piece is dedicated. It has been so inspiring to work with him, and even though music is not supposed to be understood, his playing made me feel what I wanted, and for me there is an unbroken line between my composing and his playing."

Wianko's *First Suite for Solo Cello* was commissioned by the Walter W. Naumburg Foundation for Jonathan Swensen's Weill Recital Hall debut at Carnegie Hall on November 4, 2025. The composer writes:

"The suite format is something I have loved ever since diving into my first Bach Cello Suite as an 8-year-old cellist. I still believe there is no better way for a solo instrumentalist to embody such a wide range of characters, dances, and styles in one sitting. As a composer, I find suites equally satisfying—they allow for ample experimentation and variation of sounds and narratives (and in this case, an opportunity to reflect on both my Japanese and European heritage). The best thing about them, though? If an idea isn't working, the listener doesn't have to endure it for too long.

"This suite has been a long time coming, and I enjoyed writing it immensely. Three of its movements—the Prelude, Sarabande, and Gavottes—pay direct tribute to Bach. Awa Odori is inspired by the combination of shinobue flutes and taiko drums commonly heard during Obon festival season in Japan. The other movements are based on fictitious dances: Roulette ('little wheel') is a sort of perpetual-motion 'spinning dance,' while the Passemment d'Echo ('echo passage') could be characterized as 'a lively conversation with oneself while proceeding into a canyon'—the cello gradually picks up more 'slap-back' delay as the movement progresses."

JONATHAN SWENSEN, cello
ALBERT CANO SMIT, piano

2027-28 Season
Program

Seven Variations on “Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen
WoO 46 for Cello and Piano from Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Pohádka (Fairy Tale) for Cello and Piano
I. Introduction: Andante
II. Con moto
III. Allegro

Leoš Janáček (1854–1928)

Fünf Stücke im Volkston (Five Pieces in Folk Style), Op. 102
I. Mit Humor
II. Langsam
III. Nicht schnell, mit viel Ton zu spielen
IV. Nicht zu rasch
V. Stark und markiert

Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

Intermission

Adagio & Allegro, Op. 70

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Cello Sonata in D minor, Op. 40
I. Allegro non troppo
II. Allegro
III. Largo
IV. Allegro

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

Artists are to receive equal billing on all programs.
Program subject to change.