

B I R M I N G H A M

*Chamber Music Society*

*presents*

**Justin Brown**

*and Friends*

*Gergana Gergova • Alban Gerhardt*



*Sponsored by*

Mr. & Mrs. William J. Rushton, III  
& Mr. & Mrs. William J. Rushton, IV

**Brock Recital Hall • Samford University**  
**November 9, 2014 • 4 P.M.**

# *Program*

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (German, 1770 – 1827)

*Sonata for piano and cello in C major, Op. 102, No. 1 (1815)*

*Andante – Allegro vivace*

*Adagio – Allegro vivace*

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (Russian, 1906-1975)

*Piano Trio No. 2 in E minor, Op. 67 (1944)*

*Andante - Moderato - Poco più mosso*

*Allegro con brio*

*Largo*

*Allegretto – Adagio*

## *Intermission*

ERWIN SCHULHOFF (Czech, 1894-1942)

*Duo for Violin and Cello (1925)*

*Moderato*

*Zingaresca: Allegro giocoso*

*Andantino*

*Moderato*

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (German, 1770 – 1827)

*Piano Trio in D major (“Ghost”), Op. 70, No. 1 (1808)*

*Allegro vivace e con brio*

*Largo assai e espressivo*

*Presto*

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## *Program Notes*

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### **Ludwig van Beethoven** **Sonata for piano and cello in C major, Op. 102, No. 1 • (1815)**

Beethoven's five sonatas for cello spanned his entire career, beginning in 1796 with the first two, a third sonata in 1807, and the final two sonatas of Op. 102 in 1815. Since there were no models in the works of Haydn or Mozart, Beethoven's composition of sonatas for cello and piano was unprecedented. In addition, although it had become more prominent in the string quartets and piano trios, the cello had only recently been used a solo instrument.

Published in March 1817, the *Sonatas for Cello and Piano, Op. 102*, were dedicated to the Countess Marie von Erdödy. The Countess had been friends with the composer since about 1803, and he had lived with the Count and Countess for a time in 1808. Later in 1815 the Erdödys spent the summer at Jedlersee with Beethoven and the cellist Joseph Linke. Beethoven's close contact with the cellist provided the inspiration for the composition of the Op. 102 sonatas.

Free from constraints of earlier composers, Beethoven brings life and energy to an unusual two – rather than three – movement work. Although there are traces of elements from his early works, there is more in common with later ones. Perhaps his growing deafness, which impacted the number of compositions he produced during this period, influenced the intimacy of this sonata and the more introspective works of his late period.

### **Dmitri Shostakovich** **Piano Trio No. 2 in E minor, Op. 67 • (1944)**

Although he wrote many chamber pieces, Shostakovich only wrote two piano trios, the first of which was composed in 1923. By the time his second trio was written, the composer had reached full maturity and the world was caught up in the Second World War. Although it was dedicated in memory of his friend Ivan Sollertinsky, who had recently and unexpectedly died, the *Piano Trio No. 2* seems to reflect the times and the victims of war in general.

The *Piano Trio No. 2* shares the structure of Shostakovich's recently completed *Symphony No. 8* and uses the scales and rhythms of Jewish folk music. The trio begins with the cello playing in its highest range, with the violin and piano following in successively lower pitches. The Andante transitions to Moderato with further development of the melody. The lively second movement slows into a sober third movement Largo filled with dissonance. The trio draws to a close with a march contrasted with a dance spiked by the pizzicato of the strings.

## Erwin Schulhoff Duo for Violin and Cello • (1925)

Born in Prague to a family of Jewish-German origin, Erwin Schulhoff soon showed musical promise. At the age of ten and upon the recommendation of Antonín Dvořák, Schulhoff began study at the Prague Conservatory in 1904, followed by piano study in Vienna in 1906. In 1908 he traveled to Leipzig to study composition with Max Reger, and subsequently studied in Cologne with Fritz Steinbach in 1911. Not surprisingly his early work showed the influence of Brahms and Dvořák, but, after four years of military service in the Austrian Army during the First World War, he adopted a more radical stance artistically and politically. His later works were influenced by everything from Schoenberg to jazz.

Dedicated to Leos Janáček, the *Duo for Violin and Cello* is influenced by aspects of J. S. Bach and jazz as well as Czech folk music and the compositions of Janáček. Early in the second movement, Schulhoff incorporates Gypsy violin style while the third movement is variations on short repeated melodic phrases (a technique of Janáček's). The *Duo* comes to an end with a Moderato finale recalling the opening of the first movement.

Schulhoff made a visit to the Soviet Union in 1933, following which his compositions began to reflect the tenets of social realism. This won him the label “degenerate” by the Nazis, and which, with the German occupation of Czechoslovakia, led to Schulhoff's arrest and imprisonment in 1941. He died soon afterward in a concentration camp from tuberculosis, although sometimes typhoid fever and torture are also cited.

## Ludwig van Beethoven Piano Trio in D major (“Ghost”), Op. 70, No. 1 • (1808)

In 1808, out of gratitude for her hospitality, Beethoven dedicated the two piano trios of *Op. 70* to Countess Marie von Erdödy, signaling the beginning of a prolific period of chamber composition for Beethoven.

The *Piano Trio No. 5 in D major, Op. 70, No. 1* begins with the lively unison Allegro but quickly makes play with the trio. Sometimes called boisterous, sometimes called humorous and raucous, material is introduced that will sustain interest throughout the entire composition.

The second movement gives the trio its name, “Ghost”. At the time this trio was composed, an opera based on Shakespeare's *Macbeth* had captured Beethoven's attention, and the slow movement might have a *Macbeth* opera as its foundation. The shift to D minor in the second movement takes the place of Shakespeare's words and specter, the ghost of the slain king.

Swinging back to a happier D major in the final movement, Beethoven concludes with tricky but humorous effects in both rhythm and harmony with unequally placed fermatas. The forced play between strings and piano, where the strings seem to lead the piano back from its straying, completes a work that is challenging and fulfilling.

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# Justin Brown and Friends

Justin Brown, piano  
Gergana Gergova, violin • Alban Gerhardt, cello

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## Justin Brown

Internationally acclaimed in both the symphonic and operatic repertoire, Justin Brown is General Music Director of the Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe, Germany, and Music Director Laureate of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra. Highlights of the Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe operatic season include Maestro Brown's performances of the first German production of the rare 20th century opera *Verlobung im Traum* by Hans Krása as well as new productions of *Parsifal* and *Falstaff*. Continuing his internationally recognized commitment to contemporary music, Brown will give the world premiere performances of two works by Wolfgang Rihm (with Brown as piano soloist and conductor). Brown also leads the orchestra in Thomas Adés's *Violin Concerto* with Augustin Hadelich, the German premiere of the *Double Concerto for Violin and Cello* by Thomas Larcher, plus symphonic works by Richard Strauss, Bruckner, Vaughn Williams, and Elgar. In addition, Brown and the Orchestra have been chosen to perform the annual Benefit Concert for the President of Germany in June 2015.

In six seasons as Music Director of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, Brown and the ASO received three first-place ASCAP awards in 2010, 2012, and 2013 and the John S. Edwards Award for Strongest Commitment to New American Music in 2011. In addition to commissioning eleven new works from eight composers, Brown conducted major works by many distinguished contemporary composers such as Elliott Carter, George Crumb, John Adams, Peter Lieberson, and Steve Reich. The Alabama Symphony's artistic growth also led to Brown's triumphant and "long overdue" (Alex Ross, *The New Yorker*) debut with the orchestra at Carnegie Hall in May, 2012, as part of the second annual Spring For Music Festival. His legacy includes the institution of a composer-in-residence program as well as the founding of the Alabama Symphony Youth Orchestra.

As guest conductor, Justin Brown has worked with many of the world's top orchestras, including those in England, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Germany, France, Netherlands, Russia, Brasil, Malaysia, Australia, Japan, and the U.S.

Since beginning his opera career Mr. Brown has conducted in England, Scotland, Germany, France, Portugal, and Norway. Since becoming music director of the Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe in 2008, Justin Brown has been recognized for his expansion of the orchestra's repertoire through a range of diverse programming. Under Brown's leadership, the Staatstheater received the 2012 German Publisher's Award for innovative programming and commitment to contemporary music. *Opernwelt's* 2012 year-in-review issue of the finest opera performances in Germany cited Justin Brown as "conductor of the year" in productions of *Les Troyens* by Berlioz and *A Village Romeo and Juliet* by Delius. During the last two seasons, Justin Brown's interpretations of Wagner's *Ring Cycle*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Die Meistersinger*, Britten's *Peter Grimes*, Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, and Schoenberg's

*Gurrelieder* with the Staatskapelle received rave reviews in the European press.

Justin Brown's discography includes the 2013 release of Paul Lansky's *Arches* and a 2012 release of Mahler's *Ninth Symphony*. Brown was also recognized with a 2007 Grammy nomination for Best Classical Recording for Peter Lieberon's *The Six Realms*, also the winner of a 2006 WQXR Gramophone American Award, and an Editor's Choice from Gramophone Magazine for Gershwin's complete music for Piano and Orchestra. Other recordings have included works by Carter, Ruders, Gershwin, Dvořák, and Paul Lansky. Brown also conducted a critically acclaimed recording of the Elgar and Barber cello concertos with Anne Gastinel and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

Born in England, Justin Brown studied at Cambridge University and at Tanglewood with Seiji Ozawa and Leonard Bernstein. He later served as an assistant to both Bernstein and Luciano Berio. He made his highly acclaimed conducting debut with the British stage premiere of Bernstein's *Mass*. Also in demand as a pianist, Mr. Brown's performances have been lauded on both sides of the Atlantic. He has played and directed concertos by Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Rachmaninov, and Shostakovich, and performs regularly in chamber music series both in the United States and Germany.

## Gergana Gergova

Born in Pleven, Bulgaria, to a family of musicians, Gergana Gergova studied in Germany and Austria at Folkwang Universität der Künste in Essen and Universität der Künste Graz, and finishing her Master of Chambermusic with Eberhard Feltz at Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler, Berlin.

In recognition of her talent, Gergova has won many international prizes. She has been invited to perform at festivals in the U.S. and Europe. With her ensemble Trio Imàge she tours all over Europe, North and South America, Asia, and Australia. Besides playing in the classical world, she has also performed with jazz legends such as John Pattitucci and Tom Harrell.

Gergova, as concert master, has worked with the Deutsche Oper am Rhein, Festival Strings Lucerne, the Munich Radio Orchestra, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, NDR Hannover, and Belgische Kammerphilharmonie.

There are many outlets for listening to Gergova's work. She has made radio recordings for ABC, SWR, WDR, and ORF as well as DeutschlandRadio Kultur, Bulgarian broadcast, as well as Radio Bartok, and Radio Klara. In 2014 both the debut CD of Trio Imàge (*The Complete Kagel Piano Trios*, CAvi Music) as well as the *Duo for Violin, Cello, and Orchestra* by Hans Pfitzner with the RSB Berlin under Sebastian Weigle for the English label Hyperion have been released to highest critical acclaim, both nominated for the "Deutsche Schallplattenpreis".

Gergova plays a violin by Giovanni Battista Guadagnini, Turin.

## Alban Gerhardt

With a father who was a violinist with the Berlin Philharmonic and mother who was a singer, Alban Gerhardt (b. Berlin, 1969) easily recounts the strong influences of music from his earliest years.

Since his early success at competitions and his debut with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Semyon Bychkov, Gerhardt has performed with almost 250 different orchestras worldwide under conductors such as Kurt Masur,

Christoph von Dohnányi, Christoph Eschenbach, Sir Neville Marriner, Marek Janowski, Sir Colin Davis, Leonard Slatkin, Michael Tilson-Thomas, and Esa-Pekka. In the USA from 2012–15 he will be artist in residence at the Oregon Symphony Orchestra.

Alban Gerhardt's repertoire includes more than 70 different cello concerti and he relishes rescuing lesser-known works from undeserved obscurity. His collaborations with composers such as Thomas Larcher, Peteris Vasks, Brett Dean, Jörg Widmann, Osvaldo Golijov, Mathias Hinke, and Matthias Pintscher demonstrate his commitment to enlarging the cello repertoire and in 2009 he gave the world premiere of Unsuk Chin's *Cello Concerto*, which was composed for him and commissioned by the BBC.

As well as his intensive solo career, chamber music plays an important role in Gerhardt's life; he is a frequent performer at the Edinburgh Festival and Bad Kissinger Sommer as well as the Berlin Philharmonie, Wigmore Hall, Suntory Hall in Tokyo, and the Chatelet in Paris.

Gerhardt is a highly acclaimed recording artist and has won three ECHO Classic Awards most recently for his all-Reger double CD (2009). He records exclusively with Hyperion spearheading their "Romantic Cello Concertos" series. Recent releases include Prokofiev's *Sinfonia Concertante and Concerto Op. 58* (Bergen Philharmonic/Litton), Fauré *Sonatas*, a CD of "Casals Encores" (Cécile Licad) that was selected as BBC Music Magazine's 'Chamber Choice' in August 2011, and a double-cd of the complete works for cello by Benjamin Britten to mark the composer's centenary in 2013 for which he was shortlisted for a Gramophone award.

Gerhardt plays a cello from the renowned maker Matteo Goffriller. He writes about his travelling and performing experiences in his blog, which can be accessed from his webpage: [www.albangerhardt.com](http://www.albangerhardt.com).

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Justin Brown is managed by Schmidt Artists International, Inc. • Patricia Handy • 59 East 54th Street, Suite 83 • New York, NY 10022 • Telephone +1 (212) 421-8500 • FAX +1 (212) 421-8583

Alban Gerhardt is managed by Opus 3 Artists • Earl Blackburn, Senior Vice President • 470 Park Avenue • South, 9th Floor North • New York, NY 10016 • Tel: 212-584-7514 • Fax: 646-300-8214 • Email: [EBlackburn@opus3artists.com](mailto:EBlackburn@opus3artists.com) • Web: [www.opus3artists.com](http://www.opus3artists.com).

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**February 26**

**Mnozil Brass**

(In collaboration with the Davis Architects Series)

**March 24**

**Brentano String Quartet**

(In collaboration with the Davis Architects Series)



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