

TESSA LARK
VIOLIN

ANDREW ARMSTRONG
PIANO

**LUDWIG VAN
BEETHOVEN**
(1770-1827)

Sonata No. 8 in G Major, Op. 30, no. 3

TESSA LARK
(b. 1989)

Jig and Pop

MICHAEL TORKE
(b. 1961)

Spoon Bread

**JOHN
CORIGLIANO**
(b. 1938)

STOMP

INTERMISSION

JOHN LEWIS
(1920-2021)

Django

CÉSAR FRANCK
(1822-1890)

Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano

MAURICE RAVEL
(1875-1937)

Tzigane



TESSA LARK
Violin

TESSA LARK

Violinist Tessa Lark is one of the most captivating artistic voices of our time. A 2020 GRAMMY nominee in the Best Classical Instrumental Solo category, recipient of a 2018 Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship, 2016 Avery Fisher Career Grant, Silver Medalist in the 9th Quadrennial International Violin Competition of Indianapolis, and winner of the 2012 Naumburg International Violin Competition, she has consistently been praised by critics and audiences for her astounding range of sounds, technical agility, and musical elegance. A budding superstar in the classical realm, she is also a highly acclaimed fiddler in the tradition of her native Kentucky, delighting audiences with programming that includes Appalachian and bluegrass music, as well as new music she has inspired composers to write for her.

Highlights of Lark's 2021-22 season will include: debuts at London's Wigmore Hall and Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall; return appearances for recital series such as Cal Performances and Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum; and numerous concerto engagements, including the world premiere of Michael Schachter's violin concerto, *Cycles of Life*, with the Knoxville Symphony (April 2022).

Lark's debut commercial recording – *SKY*, a bluegrass-inspired violin concerto written for her by Michael Torke, played with the Albany Symphony Orchestra – earned a 2020 GRAMMY nomination for Best Classical Instrumental Solo. Her growing discography includes: *Fantasy*, an album of fantasias by Schubert, Telemann, and Fritz Kreisler; Ravel's *Tzigane*, and Lark's own *Appalachian Fantasy*; *Invention*, a debut album of the violin-bass duo Tessa Lark and her fiancé Michael Thurber that comprises arrangements of Two-Part Inventions by J.S. Bach, along with non-classical original compositions by Lark, Thurber, and Eddie Barbash; and Astor Piazzolla's *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*, released in 2020 with the Buffalo Philharmonic in honor of Piazzolla's 100-year anniversary.

A fourth recording, *The Stradgrass Sessions*, will be released in the 2021-2022 season. It includes collaborations with composer-performers Jon Batiste, Edgar Meyer, Michael

Cleveland, and Sierra Hull; works by Bartók and Ysaÿe; and the premier recording of John Corigliano's solo violin composition, *STOMP*.

Lark's belief in the power of music to foster global connection and community manifests in her genre-defying collaborations: the violin-bass duo Lark and Thurber featuring original works inspired by American folk traditions; a string trio with composer-bassist Edgar Meyer and cellist Joshua Roman; and a duo partnership with jazz guitarist Frank Vignola.

In addition to Lark's performance schedule, she is a champion of young aspiring artists and supports the next generation of musicians through her work as Co-host/Creative of NPR's *From the Top*, the premier radio showcase for the nation's most talented young musicians. She also serves as mentor and board member of the Irving M. Klein International Strings Competition.

Lark plays a ca. 1600 G.P. Maggini violin on loan from an anonymous donor through the Stradivari Society of Chicago.

ANDREW ARMSTRONG

Praised by critics for his passionate expression and dazzling technique, pianist Andrew Armstrong has delighted audiences across Asia, Europe, Latin America, Canada, and the United States, including performances at Alice Tully Hall, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, the Grand Hall of the Moscow Conservatory, and Warsaw's National Philharmonic.

Armstrong's orchestral engagements across the globe have led him to perform a sprawling repertoire of more than 55 concertos with orchestra. He has performed with such conductors as Peter Oundjian, Itzhak Perlman, Günther Herbig, Stefan Sanderling, Jean-Marie Zeitouni, and Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, and in chamber music concerts with the Elias, Alexander, American, and Manhattan String Quartets. Armstrong has also performed as a member of the Caramoor Virtuosi, Boston Chamber



**ANDREW
ARMSTRONG**
Piano

Music Society, Seattle Chamber Music Society, and the Jupiter Symphony Chamber Players.

In addition to directing Chamber Music on Main at the Columbia Museum of Art (SC) and the Chamber Music Camp at Green Lake Festival of Music (WI), Armstrong is devoted to outreach programs and playing for children. His performances are heard regularly on National Public Radio and WQXR, New York City's premier classical music station. This spring, Andrew and violinist James Ehnes released the complete cycle of ten Beethoven Violin Sonatas to celebrate the master's 250th birthday in 2020.

NOTES

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN: SONATA NO. 8 IN G MAJOR, OP. 30, NO. 3

This sonata, one of three in Opus 30, was written in 1802 and published the following year. These years mark the beginning of what is called Beethoven's middle period, the time in his life when his hearing deteriorated to the degree that he began to share the news with close friends. In October of 1802, he wrote the Heiligenstadt Testament, in which he described both his terror at the hearing loss and his belief that art was his sole source of comfort. This sonata, of the three in Opus 30, does not reflect that personal anguish but is an energetic and lyrical dialogue between the violinist and the pianist. The fast first and third movements surround a charming and graceful minuet.

TESSA LARK: JIG AND POP

A native Kentuckian, Tessa grew up with bluegrass, Appalachian, and other American folk styles. This is her own work and was inspired by a fiddle-sounding motif that her partner, Michael Thurber, asked her to learn and improvise on for one of his pop songs. The bustling optimism immediately sparked more ideas for this piece, a virtuosic *moto perpetuo* (perpetual motion) inspired by the reel of an Irish fiddle master playing a simple tune, over and over, but in a new and entrancing version each time.

This three-movement piece, named after a popular dish in Lark's native Kentucky, was commissioned by Carnegie Hall and written for Tessa Lark by composer Michael Torke, whose music is influenced by jazz and minimalism. Each movement, named for the three ingredients of spoon bread (cornmeal, milk, and eggs), is written in a harmonic language that is unmistakably American.

MICHAEL TORKE:
SPOON BREAD

STOMP was written by the iconic American composer, John Corigliano, who has written numerous works for solo instruments, chamber ensembles, and vocal groups. About the piece, he says that it "...demands a theatrical mind, an unerring ear, and a delight in making music with the entire body. It is supposed to be fun for the audience, and a workout for the soloists." According to the composer, there are three key factors at play: 1) the two outer strings are tuned to non-standard pitches, 2) the piece is modeled on American fiddle music, bluegrass, and jazz, and 3) the violinist must periodically stomp with his/her foot along with the music, as in traditional fiddle music.

JOHN
CORIGLIANO:
STOMP

This work was composed by John Lewis, the pianist and musical director of the Modern Jazz Quartet, for whom the piece became a signature composition. Written in memory of Belgian gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt, the work is on the NPR 100, a list of the 100 most important American musical works of the 20th century, as compiled by National Public Radio editors.

JOHN LEWIS:
DJANGO

Written in 1886 when Franck was 63, the sonata was a wedding gift for the 28-year-old virtuoso violinist Eugène Ysaÿe, sometimes referred to as "The King of the Violin." The work, one of Franck's most well-known compositions, appears regularly on concert programs and is in the core repertoire of all major violinists. Jascha Heifitz, for example, played it at his final recital in 1972.

CÉSAR FRANCK:
*SONATA IN A
MAJOR FOR VIOLIN
AND PIANO*

The sonata in four movements is cyclic in nature: all the movements share common thematic threads. The sonata exists in versions for multiple other instruments, including cello, oboe, and alto saxophone. The setting for cello and piano was the only alternative version sanctioned by Franck.

**MAURICE RAVEL:
TZIGANE**

In 1922, Ravel met London-based Hungarian violinist Jelly d'Arányi at a private event; she was performing the Bartók First Violin Sonata with Béla Bartók himself at the piano. D'Arányi was the chamber partner of cellist Pablo Casals and pianist Bartók, who dedicated both of his violin sonatas to her. Ravel asked her to play some gypsy tunes for him; from this meeting came *Tzigane*, a rhapsodic and virtuosic composition imbued with Hungarian musical themes and references. The piece was dedicated to Ms. d'Arányi and completed just two days before she premiered the work.

– *Program Notes by Alix Corboy*

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