

PUC

2022/23

*Debut*



PRINCETON  
UNIVERSITY  
CONCERTS



# Víkingur Ólafsson

## *Piano*

2022/23 SEASON



Dear Friends,

This afternoon's recital is especially close to my heart. I feel immensely fortunate to be able to bring Víkingur Ólafsson to Princeton for the first time amidst one of the most dazzlingly meteoric rises I have ever witnessed within the music industry. On a more personal note, listening to his revelatory recordings sustained me throughout the darkest points of the pandemic. I turned to his albums again and again, discovering something new each time yet feeling so comforted by the sense of connection at the heart of the music—a connection between the pieces that he so thoughtfully curates, a connection to the time in which they were written, and a connection to something universal that Víkingur's rare sensitivity and sincerity brings forward. The sense of intimacy created by this combination of factors is matchless; and to be able to hear it within our cozy hall is a dream come true.

The premise of this project—to contextualize Mozart's music within the musical landscape of his contemporaries—is such a poignant reminder that music never exists in a void. It arises from, and exists as part of, the community of its time; and it endures through the community that it creates across time. What a tremendous gift that reminder was during the isolation of the pandemic. And what a dream it is to gather today as a new community and share in that together.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marna Seltzer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping "S" at the end.

Marna Seltzer

Director of Princeton University Concerts

Sunday, November 20, 2022 at 3:00PM • Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall

# VÍKINGUR ÓLAFSSON Piano

Pre-concert talk by Professor Scott Burnham at 2:00PM

## Mozart & Contemporaries

*The artist kindly requests that you reserve applause until the conclusion of the program.*

### BALDASSARE GALUPPI (1706–1785)

Andante spiritoso from Keyboard Sonata No. 9 in F Minor

### WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

Rondo in F Major, K. 494 (1786)

### CARL PHILIPP EMANUEL BACH (1714–1788)

Rondo II in D Minor, H. 290 (1785)

### DOMENICO CIMAROSA (arr. Ólafsson) (1749–1801)

Sonata No. 42 in D Minor

### MOZART

Fantasia No. 3 in D Minor, K. 397 (1782)

### MOZART

Rondo in D Major, K. 485 (1786)

### CIMAROSA (arr. Ólafsson)

Sonata No. 55 in A Minor

*Program continued on page 4, please turn the page quietly.*

## **FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN** (1732–1809)

Piano Sonata No. 47 in B Minor, Hob. XVI:32 (1776)

Allegro moderato

Minuet–Trio

Finale. Presto

## **MOZART**

Gigue in G Major, K. 574 (1789)

## **MOZART**

Piano Sonata No. 16 in C Major, K. 545 (1788)

Allegro

Andante

Rondo. Allegretto

## **MOZART** (arr. Ólafsson)

Adagio ma non troppo from String Quintet in G Minor, K. 516 (1787)

## **GALUPPI**

Larghetto from Keyboard Sonata No. 34 in C Minor

## **MOZART**

Piano Sonata No. 14 in C Minor, K. 457 (1785)

Molto allegro

Adagio

Allegro assai

## **MOZART**

Adagio in B Minor, K. 540 (1788)

## **MOZART** (trans. Franz Liszt)

*Ave verum corpus*, K. 618 (1791)



## About the Program

By Lucy Caplan © 2022 • Program Annotator

*Lucy Caplan is a Lecturer on History and Literature at Harvard University and a winner of the Rubin Prize for Music Criticism.*

Mythmaking around classical music often celebrates its transporting quality: We imagine that music can usher us into an entirely different time and place, via the stylings of a performer who has the magical ability to know precisely what the composer would have wanted their music to sound like. Víkingur Ólafsson is skeptical of this idea. “I see all music as contemporary music,” he has observed; when we play music of the past today, “we play it inevitably so differently from the way it has sounded before.” He acknowledges—even embraces—an “individual and inescapably contemporary sensibility” as the context in which musical interpretation happens.

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“Mixing the celebrated and the obscure, I hope to slightly alter our psychological attunement, removing some of the baggage we all bring with us to Mozart’s music. This is in any case what I set out to do for myself: to approach even the best-known works of Mozart with the same freedom and childlike enthusiasm I felt upon discovering the rare and staggeringly lyrical works from the likes of Galuppi and Cimarosa.” —Vikingur Ólafsson

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If a frequent corollary to the idea of performer-as-time-traveler is that of the composer-as-transcendent-genius, this evening’s program offers an alternative. Titled “Mozart and Contemporaries,” it situates Mozart’s music alongside that by other composers who were part of his broad cultural milieu: the Italians Baldassare Galuppi and Domenico Cimarosa, as well as C.P.E. Bach and Franz Joseph Haydn. With this mix of what he calls “the celebrated and the obscure,” Ólafsson hopes to “slightly alter our psychological attunement, removing some of the baggage we all bring with us to Mozart’s music. This is in any case what I set out to do for myself: to approach even the best-known works of Mozart with the same freedom and childlike enthusiasm I felt upon discovering the rare and staggeringly lyrical works from the likes of Galuppi and Cimarosa.”

Listening to this coterie of eighteenth-century European composers together, we begin to hear the qualities that unite them: a fondness for the lyricism of Italian opera, a harmonic adventurousness that anticipates Romanticism, a shared yet idiosyncratic embrace of classical forms. Together, these works invite us not so much into the world of eighteenth-century Europe as into the mindset of a contemporary artist thinking about eighteenth-century Europe—a subtle but crucial distinction which is at the core of Ólafsson’s approach.

### **Baldassare Galuppi (1706–1785)**

#### **Andante spiritoso from Keyboard Sonata No. 9 in F Minor**

#### **Larghetto from Keyboard Sonata No. 34 in C Minor**

Seen in his own time as an heir to Vivaldi, Galuppi became a mainstay of Venetian musical life in the middle of the eighteenth century. Yet even as he fit into a distinctly Italian musical tradition, Galuppi also bore many similarities to Mozart. Both were equally at home approaching the kaleidoscopic complexity of opera or the intimacy of the solo keyboard. Galuppi was also, like Mozart, a celebrated pianist himself; and he was similarly precocious, composing his first opera—a pastoral fable whose title can be translated as *Faith in Inconstancy*—at age sixteen.

Perhaps the most compelling connection between Galuppi and Mozart has less to do with their biographies and more with their shared excitement about the interpretive space between familiarity and wonder. The *Andante spiritoso* from Galuppi’s Sonata in F Minor, is dreamlike and mysterious, its swirling undulating rhythms pulled in a surprising direction with an unexpected modulation to D-flat major. In the *Larghetto* from a Sonata in C Minor, a cascading opening gesture establishes a somber mood, almost as if setting the scene for a tragic aria to unfold. The aria never comes: Instead, the work’s texture remains almost painfully spare to the end.



*Special Event*

**Wednesday, February 1, 2023 | 7:30PM**  
**JOYCE DiDONATO** Mezzo-soprano  
**IL POMO D'ORO ORCHESTRA**  
**ZEFIRA VALOVA** Conductor  
*Eden*

The poster features a portrait of mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato on the right side. She has short, light-colored hair and is wearing a colorful, abstract, painterly garment that covers her shoulders and neck. The background is dark, and the text is in a mix of gold, white, and black fonts.

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)****Rondo in F Major, K. 494 (1786)****Fantasia No. 3 in D Minor, K. 397 (1782)****Rondo in D Major, K. 485 (1786)****Gigue in G Major, K. 574 (1789)****Piano Sonata No. 16 in C Major, K. 545 (1788)****Adagio ma non troppo from String Quintet in G Minor, K. 516 (arr. Ólafsson) (1787)****Piano Sonata No. 14 in C Minor, K. 457 (1785)****Adagio in B Minor, K. 540 (1788)*****Ave verum corpus*, K. 618 (trans. Liszt) (1791)**

This collection of works by Mozart, all composed during the final decade of the composer's life, illuminates myriad formal, stylistic, and national influences: everything from Italian opera to Baroque contrapuntal thorniness to Beethoven-like Romantic angst. Together, they suggest what felt “contemporary” to Mozart: past musical ideas which still held sway, sources of immediate inspiration, sounds he imagined when he looked toward the future. There is something proto-Romantic, for example, about the sudden emotional swerves of the Rondo in F Major. The Fantasia in D Minor is even more improvisatory. An unfinished work, the Fantasia stops mid-thought; the performer must choose whether to play an ending crafted by another composer, create their own conclusion, or simply pause where Mozart did and let the uncertainty linger.

Other works are not quite so capricious. The Rondo in D Major is a rollicking piece whose title is something of a misnomer; it's actually written in textbook sonata form. The Gigue looks to the past. Mozart wrote it while in Leipzig, appropriately enough, and it evokes Bach's compositional sensibilities through near-constant cross-rhythms, use of sequences, and jagged melodic angles. The Piano Sonata in C Major, familiar to beginner pianists everywhere, eschews the moodiness of other works from this period in Mozart's life. Instead, it celebrates simplicity of construction, with straightforward textures and a gentle, sunny affect. The Adagio from the String Quintet in G Minor leaps to the other end of the emotional and textural spectrum: It is a layered, intricate work, a tender outpouring of melancholy whose depths of feeling seem boundless.

The Piano Sonata in C Minor seems to offer a glimpse of the future. The minor-key angst of the first movement anticipates early Beethoven; so does the elaborate ornamentation that characterizes the second movement, and the stormy intensity of the third. In the Adagio in B Minor, Mozart turns to an unusual-for-the-era key to evoke a sense of eerie ambiguity. Like the Fantasia heard earlier, it takes the listener on an evolving emotional journey, stopping along the way at harmonically strange outposts. Resolution—or, at least, relief—appears in the *Ave verum corpus*. Written during the final year of Mozart's life, this setting of a fourteenth-century hymn is utterly tranquil, a paragon of calm.

**Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714–1788)**

**Rondo II in D Minor, H. 290 (1785)**

Adagios, C.P.E. Bach lamented in a letter to his publisher, were “no longer fashionable” in 1780s Hamburg. Eager to stay relevant, he turned away from composing slow movements and instead turned to more popular forms, like the Rondo. This piece both meets and destabilizes expectations: Its main theme is slightly off-kilter at 11 bars long, and its rhythmic patterns are interrupted by the occasional sudden pause. In the end, though, the theme returns for a neatly stated conclusion.

**Domenico Cimarosa (arr. Ólafsson) (1749–1801)**

**Sonata No. 42 in D Minor**

**Sonata No. 55 in A Minor**

A prolific composer who wrote more than 80 operas, Domenico Cimarosa also wrote a massive array of keyboard sonatas: brief, miniature-like works which delve into the nuances of a single musical idea. Ólafsson’s arrangements adapt Cimarosa’s compositions for the more complex expressive possibilities of the grand piano, augmenting their sonorities for the modern instrument. The Sonata No. 42 is wistful and contemplative, ending on an uncertain note. The Sonata No. 55, by contrast, has an openhearted elegance, propelled by lilting, Siciliana-like dotted rhythms.

**Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)**

**Piano Sonata No. 47 in B Minor, Hob. XVI:32 (1776)**

The jokiness typically associated with Haydn is in short supply in this sonata, which maintains a rather somber mood throughout. The first movement opens with a precise, ornamented theme; its energy stays tightly coiled throughout. The composer next opts for an expansive, quick-paced Minuet in lieu of a typical slow movement, followed by a forceful, jumpy finale.



# DO-RE-MEET

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Get to know other music-enthusiasts through this new program of social events paired with concerts on the **Performances Up Close series**, in the historic Maclean House on the Princeton University campus!



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### *Speed Dating*

**Tuesday, December 13 | 7PM**

tenThing Brass Ensemble | 9PM

### *Find Your Friends*

**Sunday, March 26 | 4PM**

Chiaroscuro String Quartet | 6PM

### *LGBTQ+ Single Mingle*

**Wednesday, April 12 | 7PM**

Cécile McLorin Salvant, Vocalist | 9PM

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Tickets & More Info: [puc.princeton.edu/do-re-meet](https://puc.princeton.edu/do-re-meet)



# About Víkingur Ólafsson

Icelandic pianist Víkingur Ólafsson has made a profound impact with his remarkable combination of musicianship and visionary programs. His recordings for Deutsche Grammophon—*Philip Glass Piano Works* (2017), *Johann Sebastian Bach* (2018), *Debussy Rameau* (2020), and *Mozart & Contemporaries* (2021)—captured the public and critical imagination and have led to over 400 million streams. His latest album, *From Afar*, was released in October 2022.

Now one of the most sought-after artists performing today, Ólafsson's multiple awards include the Rolf Schock Prize in Musical Arts (2022), *Gramophone* magazine Artist of the Year, Opus Klassik Solo Recording Instrumental (twice), and Album of the Year at the *BBC Music Magazine* Awards.

In the 2022/23 season he performs with orchestras including Philharmonia Orchestra (London), Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (Amsterdam), Czech Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic, The Cleveland Orchestra, London and Bergen Philharmonic Orchestras, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and Orchestre symphonique de Montréal.

A captivating communicator both on and off stage, Ólafsson's significant talent extends to broadcast, having presented several of his own series for television and radio. He was Artist-in-Residence for three months on BBC Radio 4's flagship arts program, *Front Row*—broadcasting live during lockdown from an empty Harpa concert hall in Reykjavík. He reached millions of listeners around the world. Today's concert marks his Princeton University Concerts debut.

A N N O U N C I N G

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Other support comes from donors like you. We are grateful to the individuals whose support at all levels ensures that musical performance remains a vital part of Princeton, the community, and the region.

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**We are happy to thank all of our staff and volunteers for their support.**

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# 22/23

## SEASON



JESS GILLAM  
Saxophone

### CONCERT CLASSICS

Thursday, October 13 | 7:30PM

**GENEVA LEWIS\*** Violin  
**AUDREY VARDANEGA\*** Piano

Thursday, November 3 | 7:30PM

**BRENTANO STRING QUARTET**

Sunday, November 20 | 3PM

**VÍKINGUR ÓLAFSSON\*** Piano

Pre-concert talk by Professor Scott Burnham at 2PM

Thursday, February 16 | 7:30PM

**ALEXI KENNEY** Violin

Wednesday, March 8 | 7:30PM

**LAWRENCE BROWNLEE** Tenor  
**KEVIN J. MILLER\*** Piano

Thursday, March 30 | 7:30PM

**JUPITER ENSEMBLE\***

Thursday, April 6 | 7:30PM

**ALINA IBRAGIMOVA\*** Violin  
**CÉDRIC TIBERGHIE** Piano

Thursday, April 27 | 7:30PM

**EMERSON & CALIDORE STRING QUARTETS**

### PERFORMANCES UP CLOSE

Wednesday, October 26 | 6PM & 9PM

**JESS GILLAM** Saxophone  
**THOMAS WEAVER\*** Piano

Tuesday, December 13 | 6PM & 9PM

**tenTHING BRASS ENSEMBLE\***

Sunday, March 26 | 3PM & 6PM

**CHIAROSCURO STRING QUARTET\***

Wednesday, April 12 | 6PM & 9PM

**CÉCILE McLORIN SALVANT\*** Vocals  
**SULLIVAN FORTNER\*** Piano

### RICHARDSON CHAMBER PLAYERS

Sunday, November 13 & Sunday, March 5 | 3PM

### SPECIAL EVENTS

Wednesday, February 1 | 7:30PM

**JOYCE DiDONATO** Mezzo-soprano  
**IL POMO d'ORO\*** Orchestra

Tuesday, February 21 | 7:30PM

**MITSUKO UCHIDA** Piano

### HEALING WITH MUSIC

Thursday, September 29 | 7:30PM

**INTRODUCING CLEMENCY BURTON-HILL**

Exploring music's role in brain injury recovery

Wednesday, November 9 | 7:30PM

**JOSHUA ROMAN** Cello  
Living with Long COVID as a musician

Thursday, February 9 | 7:30PM

**FRED HERSCH\*** Piano  
Exploring music's role after an AIDS-related coma

### ALL IN THE FAMILY

Featuring The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

Saturday, October 22 | 1PM

**MEET THE MUSIC**, for ages 6–12

Saturday, May 20 | 1PM & 3PM

**CMS KIDS**, for neurodiverse audiences ages 3–6

### AT THE MOVIES

Tuesday, October 11 | 7:30PM

**FALLING FOR STRADIVARI**

Wednesday, February 8 | 7:30PM

**THE BALLAD OF FRED HERSCH**

### LIVE MUSIC MEDITATION

Matthew Weiner, Meditation Instruction

Thursday, September 29 | 12:30PM

**ALEXI KENNEY** Violin

Wednesday, October 26 | 12:30PM

**JESS GILLAM** Saxophone

Thursday, February 9 | 12:30PM

**FRED HERSCH** Piano

\*Princeton University Concerts debut

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