PRINCETON
UNIVERSITY
CONCERTS

Jean-Guihen Queyras Cello
Alexandre Tharaud Piano



26/27 SEASON

PRINCETON
UNIVERSITY
CONCERTS

Dear Friends,

We always look forward to welcoming Jean-Guihen Queyras back to our stage. Over the years we've heard him in so many guises: in trio with violinist Isabelle Faust and pianist Alexander Melnikov, and as part of the superb Arcanto Quartet. But there's something different about hearing a duo, where there is no quartet or trio to share the conversation, just two voices, each entirely exposed. What a treat, then, to hear him in dialogue with pianist Alexandre Tharaud, who makes his Princeton University Concerts debut this evening.

A cello recital is a rare thing on our series, and that alone makes me happy. This is extraordinary repertoire, and I can't wait to dig into it alongside all of you. As winter approaches, this is exactly the kind of warm, mellow comfort we need.

Welcome, Jean-Guihen and Alexandre—we're so glad you're here.

Enjoy the performance!



Marna Seltzer
Director of Princeton University Concerts

Thursday, November 5, 2026 at 7:30PM • Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall

JEAN-GUIHEN QUEYRAS Cello
ALEXANDRE THARAUD Piano

FRANCIS POULENC
(1899–1963)

Suite française
- Bransle de Bourgogne
- Pavane
- Petite marche militaire
- Complainte
- Bransle de Champagne
- Sicilienne
- Carillon

JOHANNES BRAHMS
(1833–1897)

Cello Sonata No. 1 in E Minor, Op. 38
- Allegro non troppo
- Allegretto quasi Menuetto
- Allegro

INTERMISSION

ALBAN BERG
(1885–1935)

Four Pieces, Op. 5
- Massig
- Sehr langsam
- Sehr rasch
- Langsam

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797–1828)	Adagio from Arpeggione Sonata in A Minor, D. 821
BENJAMIN BRITTEN (1913–1976)	Movts 1 & 5 from Cello Sonata in C Major, Op. 65 Dialogo. Allegro Moto perpetuo, Presto
MARIN MARAIS (1656–1728)	Prélude from Pièces de viole, 2nd Book, Suite in D Minor
CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)	Prologue: Lent, sostenuto e molto risoluto from Cello Sonata, L. 135
GABRIEL FAURÉ (1845–1924)	Sicilienne, Op. 78 Papillon, Op. 77
JOHANNES BRAHMS	Hungarian Dances No. 1 in G Minor No. 7 in A Major No. 5 in G Minor

Out of respect for the artists and enjoyment of your fellow concertgoers, please turn off cell phones and other electronic devices before the concert. Photographs and audio/video recording are prohibited during the performance.



About the Program

By Lucy Caplan © 2026 • Program Annotator

Lucy Caplan is assistant professor of music at Worcester Polytechnic Institute and the author of Dreaming in Ensemble: How Black Artists Transformed American Opera. *In 2026-2027, she is the Marilyn Beaudry-Corbett Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University.*

Many concert programs today follow a certain set of conventions. There will be three or four complete works, most of which were written long ago, with perhaps one more recent piece. The composers' names will generally be familiar. There will be an intermission after the second piece, and then we will settle back into our seats for a longer final treat. This programming strategy—which often works beautifully—exemplifies the completist, canonical mindset that drives much of classical music culture today.

> "...This evening's program transforms the past into a potpourri, curating a selection of movements from longer pieces rather than insisting upon completeness for its own sake..."

Yet this is not the only option. Not too long ago, concert programs tended to be far more eclectic, merging old favorites with newer sounds currently in vogue. This evening's program harkens back to that model. Rather than featuring contemporary music by living composers, it transforms the past into a potpourri, curating a selection of movements from longer pieces rather than insisting upon completeness for its own sake. It's interesting to note that even as this strategy echoes past approaches to programming, it also mirrors the way that listeners often encounter music in our own age of streaming platforms: hitting "play" on favorite tracks again and again, rather than listening to entire albums in one go. When we listen to more works in programmatic conversation with one another, as this program invites us to do, new senses of connection might emerge. Most fundamentally, though, it's a reminder that there is no one right way to listen to the music we love.

Francis Poulenc, Suite française, FP 80 (1935; arr. for cello and piano 1953)
Neoclassical composition was all the rage in interwar Europe, as composers from Igor Stravinsky to Paul Hindemith looked back to the elegant forms and precise rhythms of an earlier age. Poulenc's Suite française exemplifies the trend, using dances by the sixteenth-century musician Claude Gervaise as the basis of a new work. Originally written as incidental music for a play, for a small orchestra of winds, percussion, and harpsichord, the suite was later arranged for cello and piano. Its seven short movements—which range from the upbeat opening Bransle de Bourgogne to a dignified Sicilienne—refract centuries-old tunes through spiky modern harmonies, creating a sonic world that hovers somewhere between past and present.

Johannes Brahms, Cello Sonata No. 1 in E Minor, Op. 38 (1862–65)
Much like Poulenc's Suite, Brahms' Cello Sonata glances backward. Direct and indirect references to earlier works abound: a theme reminiscent of Beethoven's A Major Cello Sonata in the second movement, a near-exact quotation from Bach's "Art of the Fugue" in the third. Given that this work was Brahms's first duo sonata, these gestures come across as a fairly bold way for the young composer to position himself as a natural successor to these esteemed composers. The first movement, anchored by the recurring melodic figure of a rising minor sixth, is expansive, comprising nearly half of the work's duration. The waltz-like second movement has a reserved delicacy, while the third is resolutely old-fashioned. Its sonata form is inflected with fugal elements, and piano and cello engage in a vivid contrapuntal dialogue which never loses its sense of propulsive energy.

Alban Berg, Four Pieces for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 5 (1913) (arr. Queyras/Tharaud)
Berg's "little pieces" make the miniatures of the nineteenth century seem extravagant by comparison: each piece lasts barely a minute or two, in line with a broader modernist vogue for prizing the fragmentary over the grand or synthetic. These pieces—which were originally written for clarinet and piano—also seem to have exposed some interpersonal tensions, with Berg's mentor Arnold Schoenberg harshly critiquing his student's work. The first piece is jittery, never settling into a consistent tempo, while the second is a calmer respite. The third begins and ends with whispery murmurs, and the set concludes with a foray into haunting lyricism.

Franz Schubert, Adagio from Arpeggione Sonata in A Minor, D. 821 (1824)
Turn a guitar ninety degrees counterclockwise, neck stretching upward, and you would have something like the arpeggione: an early nineteenth-century instrument, held like a cello, which features a six-string fretted fingerboard and is played with a bow. The arpeggione's vogue was short-lived, but it was sufficiently popular in its day for Schubert to write a sonata for it. The work outlasted the instrument, thanks to popular transcriptions for viola and cello. This movement makes it easy to see why. It evokes the ethereal stillness characteristic of Schubert's most beloved slow movements (the Cello Quintet comes to mind in particular), its sense of transcendence heightened by its celestial E-major tonality. An inexplicably simple melody wanders up and down above a tranquil accompaniment, elegant ornamentation guiding its gentle motion and perpetual return to its tonal home.

Benjamin Britten, Movts. 1 & 5 from Sonata in C for Cello and Piano, Op. 65 (1961)
Upon their very first meeting, the celebrated cellist Mstislav Rostropovich invited Benjamin Britten to write a piece for him. Just a few months later, Britten sent along the score for this sonata, which quickly met with its dedicatee's approval—Rostropovich pronounced himself "admiring and in love with your great sonata." The good feelings continued when the two met to play through the work, offering a remarkable example of interpersonal cooperation against the backdrop of Cold War politics. The sonata's first movement, aptly titled "Dialogo," moves from an almost hesitant beginning—the cello chiming in for just one quarter note in each measure—to an adventurous interplay between the two instruments, brief lyrical fragments sharing space with atmospheric harmonics and high-energy sequences. The final movement is a brief but powerful Moto Perpetuo which stays mostly pianissimo and piano, bouncing with anticipatory energy before finally dashing to the finish.

Marin Marais, Prélude from Suite in D Minor (Pièces de viole, Livre II) (1701)
A renowned performer on the viol as well as a prolific composer, Marin Marais was a key figure of the French Baroque. He wrote close to six hundred works for his instrument, arranged in a series of books—what amounts to hundreds of hours of music. Marais had a rather freewheeling approach to composition, indicating in these book's prefaces that the pieces could be adapted for various instruments and played in various orders. Flexibility was the name of the game, and performers were encouraged to take an active creative role. This Prélude has an improvisatory feel, wandering unhurriedly from gesture to gesture and luxuriating in the richness of its minor-key tonality.

Claude Debussy, Prologue. Lent, sostenuto e molto risoluto
from Sonata for Cello and Piano, L. 135 (1915) (arr. Léon Roques)
Composed just two years after the spare Berg pieces featured earlier on this program, Debussy's sonata seems to emerge from a wholly different musical universe. It is abundantly emotional and musically omnivorous, borrowing from blues harmonies, dance rhythms, and Romantic expressivity. Indeed, at this point in his life Debussy was skeptical of the austere sounds coming out of the Second Viennese School, writing in a 1915 letter to a friend, "This power of the right chord in the right place that strikes you…we are still in the age of harmonic progressions, and people who are happy just with beauty of sound are hard to find." But Debussy's conception of "beauty of sound" was far from old-fashioned, drawing concomitantly on French Baroque gesture and new "special effects" like harmonics. This Prologue features grand, intricately ornamented melodies in both instruments. Its middle section makes captivating use of tiny melodic building blocks, constructing a sense of scale through the repetition of simple figures.

FREE FOOD!

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: COME TO INTERNOSHIN'!

Tonight, at intermission, meet your fellow student attendees in the Richardson Lounge (basement level) and share your thoughts about the concert over free snacks.

Hosted by the Student Ambassadors of Princeton University Concerts.

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Gabriel Fauré, Sicilienne, Op. 78 & Papillon, Op. 77 (1898)
Gabriel Fauré enjoyed international acclaim by the 1890s, and these pieces were published simultaneously in France and England, reflecting his eminent stature. The Sicilienne—which, like the Poulenc piece earlier on this program, was originally composed as incidental music for a play—is elegant and old-fashioned, its 6/8 meter flowing along with placid tranquility. Far more virtuosic is Papillon, which was likely written more than a decade earlier but got lost in the mire of publication delays. Quicksilver passagework alternates with more melodic passages, inviting the cellist to showcase technical chops as well as emotional expressivity.

Johannes Brahms, Hungarian Dances No. 1 in G Minor, No. 7 in A Major, No. 5 in F-sharp Minor (1868) (arr. Queyras/Tharaud)
Brahms's much-loved Hungarian Dances endure for their memorable melodies and catchy rhythmic patterns. Written after the composer toured with Hungarian Ede Reményi, they manage to be both charming and robust. Their moods are unpredictable, turning on a dime from serene to tempestuous. Within this set, Dance No. 1 embodies Brahms' mastery of rich harmonies, while Dance No. 7 stands out for its playful elegance.

DO-RE-MEET
SOCIAL EVENTS *for* MUSIC LOVERS

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY CONCERTS

NEW FRIENDS, NO STRINGS ATTACHED!

Wednesday, February 3, 2027 | 6:30PM | Maclean House
Make new connections over a shared love of music through a range of social activities before enjoying a concert together by the trailblazing artists of the **Junction Trio**—violinist Stefan Jackiw, cellist Jay Campbell, and pianist Conrad Tao.
puc.princeton.edu



JEAN-GUIHEN QUEYRAS Cello

Jean-Guihen Queyras plays concertos and chamber music all over the world, with a deep commitment to early music repertoire and the works of living composers. He was a founding member of the Arcanto Quartet and performs as part of a trio with Isabelle Faust and Alexander Melnikov. Both ensembles have played at Princeton University Concerts in previous seasons. In addition, he has collaborated with zarb specialists Bijan and Keyvan Chemirani on a program featuring music of the Mediterranean. This versatility of his practice has led to numerous concert halls, festivals, and orchestras inviting Jean-Guihen as an Artist in Residence, including the Concertgebouw Amsterdam and the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Vredenburg Utrecht, De Bijloke Ghent, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg, and Wigmore Hall. He has built an outstanding discography, recording exclusively for Harmonia Mundi. This season includes appearances all over the world, including this North American tour with pianist Alexandre Tharaud, celebrating thirty years of their musical partnership. Jean-Guihen holds a professorship at the University of Music Freiburg and is Artistic Director of the Rencontres Musicales de Haute-Provence festival in Forcalquier. He plays on the "Kaiser" Stradivarius made in Cremona in 1707.

This is Jean-Guihen's fourth appearance with Princeton University Concerts. For an official biography, please visit jeanguihenqueyras.com.

ALEXANDRE THARAUD Piano

With an extraordinary discography of over 25 solo albums, most of which have received major awards from the international music press, Alexandre Tharaud's repertoire spans from Couperin, Bach, and Scarlatti to Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, extending to the major French composers of the 20th century. A highly sought-after soloist, Alexandre performs regularly with many of the world's leading orchestras. As a recitalist, he is a frequent guest at the world's most prestigious venues. Highlights of the current season include solo appearances at Wigmore Hall, Philharmonie de Paris, Musikverein Wien, Bozar Brussels, Concertgebouw Brugge, Salle Bourgie, and Opéra de Lyon, among others. Alexandre is an exclusive recording artist with Warner Classics. His forthcoming album *Mémoire*, is a collection of 27 works by 27 French composers spanning several centuries. Alexandre is also the author of three books. His latest, *Touché,* is an intimate and autobiographical reflection on his life in music.

This is Alexandre Tharaud's Princeton University Concerts debut. For an official biography, please visit alexandretharaud.com.

SUPPORT US

Supporting Princeton University Concerts is critical to our future. Ticket sales cover less than half of the cost of presenting the very best in world-class music. Remaining funds come, in part, from our generous endowment, left to PUC by the Ladies' Musical Committee in 1929. We remain eternally grateful for the support of the Philena Fobes Fine Memorial Fund and the Jesse Peabody Frothingham Fund.

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.

If you wish to make a donation to Princeton University Concerts, please call us at 609-258-2800, visit puc.princeton.edu, or send a check payable to Princeton University Concerts to: Princeton University Concerts, Woolworth Center, Princeton, NJ 08544.

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PRINCETON UNIVERSITY CONCERTS

Fall 26

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Annual Chamber Jam • FREE
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Thursday, October 8 | 7PM
"MY BRAIN: AFTER THE RUPTURE"

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Thursday, October 15 | 6PM & 8:30PM
Pre-Concert: Do-Re-Meet Speed Dating | 6:30PM
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Performances Up Close
Tuesday, October 27 | 6PM & 8:30PM
Pre-Concert: Do-Re-Meet-LGBTQIA+ | 6:30PM
EMA NIKOLOVSKA,* Mezzo-soprano
SEAN SHIBE,* Guitar

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Music & Healing
Sunday, November 1 | 3PM
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Thursday, November 5 | 7:30PM
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ALEXANDRE THARAUD,* Piano

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At the Princeton Garden Theatre
Wednesday, November 18 | 7PM
"FOUR RATIONAL PEOPLE"

Concert Classics Series
Thursday, December 3 | 7:30PM
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LUKAS GENIUŠAS,* Piano

Live Music Meditation • FREE
Wednesday, December 9 | 12PM
TONY SIQI YUN, Piano

Performances Up Close / Pianists in Recital
Wednesday, December 9 | 6PM & 8:30PM
TONY SIQI YUN,* Piano

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