

# Bryan Cheng, cello

The first cellist to win Grand Prize at the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal Competition, and the first-ever Canadian laureate at the prestigious Paulo International Cello Competition, 22-year-old **Bryan Cheng** has already secured a distinctive place in the world of classical music. He made his solo debut at age 10 with the Orchestre de chambre I Musici de Montréal, his Carnegie Hall recital debut at 14, and his Elbphilharmonie debut in 2018 with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen.

Solo highlights of recent and upcoming seasons include appearances with the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Panamá, Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, Tapiola Sinfonietta, and Südwestdeutsches Kammerorchester Pforzheim, as well as the Okanagan, Springfield, Adelphi, Niagara, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Lahti, and Schleswig-Holstein symphonies; a coast-to-coast Canadian tour with the National Youth Orchestra as 2017 Canada Council for the Arts Michael Measures Prize winner; and a summer 2020 residency with the Orchestra of the Americas, collaborating with such esteemed conductors as Matthias Pintscher, Susanna Mälkki, Peter Oundjian, Joshua Weilerstein, and Jonathan Darlington.

Also in-demand as a recitalist, Bryan tours the world extensively as cellist of Cheng<sup>2</sup> Duo. He has performed in every Canadian province, a dozen countries, and on three continents, in such venues as Montréal's Maison Symphonique, Toronto's Koerner Hall, Edmonton's Winspear Centre, Aspen's Harris Hall, Brussels' Flagey Hall, Berlin's Philharmonie, Helsinki's Musiikkitalo, and Shanghai's Poly Grand Theatre, as well as at international festivals including Dresdner Musikfestspiele, Usedom, Aspen, Ottawa Chamberfest, Toronto Summer Music Festival, Festival of the Sound, and Indian River.

The 2019/20 season takes Bryan on a European tour of the Duo's Beethoven 2020 project, *Ludwig & Beyond*, as well as to Los Angeles, San Diego, Michigan, New York, Vancouver, Ottawa, and Montréal's Salle Bourgie. Festival appearances include Russia's Trans-Siberian Art Festival, Germany's Kammermusikfestival Spannungen, Italy's Trasimeno Festival, Québec's Virée classique and Orford Musique, among others. Touring highlights from recent seasons include 14 cities in British Columbia and Yukon, 16 across Ontario and Québec as Jeunesses Musicales Canada artist, 10 in Atlantic Canada as Debut Atlantic artist, and 13 across China.

Bryan is laureate of First Prize at the 2019 Hellam International Young Artists' Competition, Second Prize and two special prizes at the TONALI 8 Grand Prix in Hamburg, Grand Prize at Adelphi Orchestra International Competition in NYC, First Prize at National Arts Centre Bursary Competition, and one of CBC's "30 hot Canadian classical musicians under 30", as well as a two-time Sylva Gelber Music Foundation Award winner.

Over the years, Bryan has accumulated a concert repertoire spanning five centuries, and is equally committed to both traditional masterworks and the music of his time. He has commissioned and given eleven world premieres, including two pieces by Canadian composer Alexina Louie at his second Carnegie Hall recital; the North American premiere of a cello concerto by British-Russian composer Gabriel Prokofiev (grandson of Sergei) at Koerner Hall with

the Esprit Orchestra; and most recently, a multimedia project featuring five new Canadian works by composers from all regions of the country at the National Gallery of Canada.

Bryan has released a trilogy of critically-acclaimed albums on German classical label *audite*: *Russian Legends* (2019, selected by BBC Radio Scotland as *Album of the Week*), *Violonchelo del fuego* (2018), and *Violoncelle français* (2016, selected as one of WCRB Classical Radio Boston's top 8 CDs of 2017). The recordings have been lauded by international press and publications in a dozen countries worldwide for their "musical sensitivity", "maturity and perfection", "extremely imaginative and personal interpretation", "taste, sure flair for phrasing, and beauty of sound".

Bryan has donated hundreds of hours playing for fundraisers for various local, national, and international charities, including the Ottawa Hospital Foundation, the Ottawa Snowsuit Fund, the Leading Note Foundation, the Young String Performers' Foundation, Friends of the National Art Centre Orchestra, National Youth Orchestra of Jamaica, the Canadian Red Cross, etc. and has raised thousands of dollars for children in Canada and abroad. He has also donated three of his previous cellos to OrKidstra, which is modelled after the El Sistema program in Venezuela and provides underprivileged children in Ottawa with free instruments and lessons.

Formerly studying with cellist and conductor Yuli Turovsky and Hans Jørgen Jensen of Northwestern University, Bryan is currently pursuing his Bachelor's degree at the Universität der Künste (University of the Arts) in Berlin in the studio of Jens Peter Maintz. Over the years, he has also been mentored by David Geringas, Frans Helmerson, Menahem Pressler, Laurence Lesser, Richard Aaron, David Finckel, and Jian Wang.

Bryan plays on the ca. 1696 *Bonjour* Stradivari cello and the ca. 1830 *Shaw* Adam bow, generously on loan from the Canada Council for the Arts Musical Instrument Bank as First Laureate of their 2018 Competition.