

## Bryan Cheng, cello



The first cellist to win Grand Prize at the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal Competition (2019), and the first-ever Canadian laureate at the prestigious Paulo International Cello Competition (2018), 23-year-old **Bryan Cheng** continues to captivate critics and audiences alike with his “absolutely astonishing” (*La Presse*) command of the cello, “dreamy beauty” (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*), and his “abundant facility, innate musicality, and sense of joy” (*New York Concert Review*). He made his solo debut at age 10 with the Orchestre de chambre I Musici de Montréal, his sold-out 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 engagements with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin in the prestigious ›Debüt im Deutschlandfunk Kultur series, National Arts Centre Orchestra Ottawa, Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Panamá, Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, Tapiola Sinfonietta, Südwestdeutsches Kammerorchester Pforzheim, and Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, as

well as the Springfield (MO), Kingston, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Okanagan, Niagara, Lahti, and Schleswig-Holstein symphonies; a coast-to-coast Canadian tour with the National Youth Orchestra as winner of the Canada Council for the Arts’ Michael Measures Prize; and a residency with the Orchestra of the Americas. He has collaborated 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, more than a dozen countries, and on three continents, in such venues as Toronto’s Koerner Hall, 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, and Festival of the Sound.

2020-21 season highlights include recitals in Dresden, Los Angeles, New York, Ottawa, Montréal, and Vancouver; a European tour of the Duo’s Beethoven 250 project, *Ludwig & Beyond*; and appearances at Belgium’s Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel, Germany’s Kammermusikfestival “Spannungen”, Russia’s Trans-Siberian Art Festival, and Italy’s Trasimeno Festival. 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 cities across China.

Bryan is laureate of First Prize at the inaugural Bader & Overton Canadian Cello Competition (2020), First Prize at the 2019 Hellam International Young Artists' Competition, Second Prize and two special prizes at the TONALI 18 Grand Prix in Hamburg, Grand Prize at Adelphi Orchestra International Competition in NYC, and one of CBC's "30 hot Canadian classical musicians under 30", as well as a three-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 a dozen 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 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 the late 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 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 Musical Instrument Bank as First Laureate of their 2018 Competition.