

Kennesaw State University  
School of Music



Senior Recital

**Michael Caleb Thomas, cello**

Judith Cole, piano



Wednesday, December 7, 2016 at 8 pm  
Music Building Recital Hall  
Sixty-third Concert of the 2016-17 Concert Season

# program

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

## **Solo Cello Suite 3**

- I. *Prelude*
- II. *Allemande*
- III. *Courante*
- IV. *Sarabande*
- V. *Bourrée I & II*
- VI. *Gigue*

## intermission

NIKOLAI YAKOVLEVICH MYASKOVSKY (1881-1950)

## **Cello Sonata No. 2, Op. 81**

- I. *Allegro moderato*
- II. *Andante cantabile*

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree  
Bachelor of Music in Music Education.  
Mr. Thomas studies cello with Charae Krueger.

# program notes

*The aim and final end of all music should be none other than the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul.*

~ Johann Sebastian Bach

## **Solo Cello Suite 3** | Johann Sebastian Bach

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) invites us on a journey into the Third Suite for Solo Cello with the *Prelude*, following an A-B-A-C form in C Major. His use of scalar and arpeggiated passages set the scene for the entire suite as energetic, sophisticated, and playfully enticing. Bach utilizes the dynamic range of the cello. From the instruments descending scale into the powerful C string in the introduction, to its resounding chords in the climax and conclusion, the music beautifully reverberates from within this wooden frame and out into the souls of the audience.

Following the *Prelude* comes the *Allemande*; introducing a unique style beginning with three up beat notes, making it the only movement to do so. The use of ornamental sounding 32nd notes gives this movement a bounce to it. Bach incorporates a change in key, moving from C major to the dominant G major, and later to A minor with a slight pull that has us all longing for resolve. He heightens the attention of the listener with the use of ascending lines and tasteful double stops (playing two strings with differing notes at the same time).

The third movement, the *Courante* (kōō'rānt) – (meaning “dance-like”), has a distinct spring to it. This can be heard when the flow of the melodic line changes from a sway feel to an aggressive attitude and graciously back to its original dance like state. Bach’s continual use of brief chordal differentiation between major and minor gives a change in moods conveyed in this movement.

Now, we come to the more contemplative of the movements: the *Sarabande*. This triple meter, slow dance presents a richness and depth, inviting the listener into a soothing presence with its purity of sound. Bach emphasizes the relation between tonal harmony and dissonance, making the briefly agitated listener longing for resolve. Thankfully, he does not disappoint. Before reaching the end of this journey, the fifth movement is comprised of two separate sections put into one, which are the *Bourrées* (bōō'rā) I & II. This combined movement begins spritely, like the leaves in a wind-filled forest that let loose and fly into the distant fields of tall grass, dancing along

without a care in the world. But what follows in the second *Bourrée* is a dark, chilled presence, modulating into the minor mode. Thankfully, the form repeats, taking the listener back to the fields, as the performer refreshes us with a familiar tune.

And finally, the end has come with the vivacious and energetic sixth movement: the *Gigue*. This lively and aggressive play of building lines captivates the spirits of the listener as the performer alternates through string crossings and modal interchange. Dynamic contrast gives direction to the rise and fall of each melodic line, making this concluding movement of Bach's Third Suite one to fill the heart with joy.

### **Cello Sonata No. 2, Op. 81** | Nikolai Yakovlevich Myaskovsky

Acclaimed by a music critique as “the forgotten man of Russian music” and “one of the most underrated composers of the 20th century,” Nikolai Yakovlevich Myaskovsky (1881-1950), born just under two hundred years after J. S. Bach, was a Russian composer born in Poland near Warsaw. His musical inspirations came at the age of 15 where, in St. Petersburg, he heard Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* under the direction of Nikisch in 1896. This experience set him on the course of becoming a composer, against his father's wishes of wanting him to emulate his military career. Myaskovsky studied piano and violin, later enrolling in the St. Petersburg Conservatory where he studied with Rimsky-Korsakov and Liadov. He became good friends with Prokofiev during his studies there. After graduating the conservatory, the Great War encroached upon Myaskovsky's early years and nearly consumed him in the four years of his service in the Red Army. After being badly injured in war on the Austrian front, he began to write works inspired by his experiences. It was said about him that his “brutal youth [left him] a fragile, secretive, introverted man, hiding some mystery within. It was as if his numerous symphonies provided a convenient if not necessary refuge in which he could hide and transpose his soul into sonorities.”

Nikolai Yakovlevich Myaskovsky's (1881-1950) Cello Sonata No. 2 in A minor depicts melodic motifs of agonizing longing and intense frustration, somber contemplation and meditative reflection, and finally a sense of release with triumphant deliverance. Composed in 1948, just two years before his death, Myaskovsky dedicated this piece to Mstislave Leopoldovich “Slava” Rostropovich, one of the greatest cellists of the 20th century. In describing the sonata, one depicted it as if “parting with his friends [is] expressed in the most intimate form”.

The musical phrases within both the first and second movements are so beautifully conveyed between the two lines of the cello and piano. The lyrical line is exchanged between the two instruments at various times, giving an opportunity for each instrument to paint a picture of the composer's anguish and liberation through music. Myaskovsky uses modulation between various keys to expand his message. He reintroduces the theme of the work, for both the first and second movement, after meandering through rhythmic syncopation and lyrical sounding hills and valleys. The use of chromatic flow gives an interesting texture to the exchange and blending of the melodic phrasing between the two instruments. During his life, and in the legacy that he left, Myaskovsky was treasured for his immense knowledge, his collection of scores being unique, and his challenge to his students to write freely and discover originality.

## biography

**M**ichael Caleb Thomas, a native of Kennesaw, Georgia, is in his fourth year of higher education at Kennesaw State University (KSU), studying Music Education with an emphasis in Orchestra. He studies cello under the direction of Charae Krueger. His abilities as a cellist have been demonstrated through the Symphony Orchestra at KSU under the direction of Dr. Nathaniel Parker and Dr. Michael Alexander, small ensembles including string trios, string quartets, and a cello choir. He also has sung in the Men's Ensemble under the direction of Dr. Leslie Blackwell.

Mr. Thomas has had the opportunities to teach in several public and private schools in Cobb County, Forsyth County, and other schools in the higher Atlanta area. He has recruited for orchestra at Dickerson Middle, Durham Middle, Lanier Middle, McClure Middle, and Palmer Middle. He is an active member in student organizations such as the American String Teachers Association (ASTA) and the Colligate National Association for Music Educators (cNAfME). His involvement in these programs has given him the opportunity to attend several workshops, orchestral readings, and national conferences including the Georgia Music Educators Association (GMEA) Conference in 2015 and 2016.

Mr. Thomas has performed in several venues ranging from large church services and weddings to small gatherings and fundraiser dinners. Large venues include performing at the Cobb Energy Centre with the KSU Symphony Orchestra in the fall of 2014, and at Spivey Hall with KSU Cello Choir in the fall of 2015. Small venues include the Brumby Home, dozens of weddings throughout the year, and several large-scale holiday concerts during the holiday season.

Mr. Thomas enjoys long walks on the beach, deep conversations, puns like you wouldn't believe(!), but most importantly would like to thank God for His Love and saving Grace, his incredible Mom, Dad, and four younger siblings (Bella, Buddy, Israel, and Bekah) along with his extended family that are so dear to him, and his amazing and supportive friends. Thank you all so much. Love you guys!

After finishing his Music Education Degree at Kennesaw State, Mr. Thomas hopes to become a middle school orchestra director.

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KSU Faculty String Trio  
KSU Community and Alumni Choir

# about the school of music

The School of Music at Kennesaw State University is an exciting place to live, work and learn. Housed in the College of the Arts, the School is infused with masterfully skilled and dedicated performing teachers who care deeply about their profession, our programs, our community, and every student involved in music and the arts. We are so excited about the musical and artistic events that happen here, and we are excited that you are here with us to enjoy them!

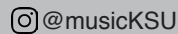
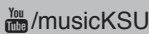
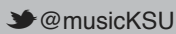
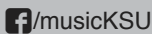
The School of Music is busy preparing our students to be productive artists. We want them to be accomplished and creative leaders of the arts world of tomorrow, professionals who are diversely trained and well-practiced. Diverse in their backgrounds, our students hail from many of the leading musical arts and honors organizations from across the Southeast, and as a School of Music, we are dedicated to the purpose of furthering the arts and cultural offerings to our region and beyond.

Please take the time to meet our faculty, students and staff. Interact with them, talk shop with them - their enthusiasm is contagious whether on or off the stage. I look forward to a long and rewarding relationship with you. With your continued support of music and the arts, there is nothing that we cannot accomplish together!



Stephen W. Plate, DMA  
Director  
KSU School of Music

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