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FIRST VIOLINS

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Miller Nichols Chair
Stirling Trent,
Acting Associate Concertmaster
Chiafei Lin,
Acting Assistant Concertmaster
Anne-Marie Brown
Betty Chen
Anthony DeMarco
Susan Goldenberg*
Tomoko Iguchi
Dorris Dai Janssen
Filip LazovskiΔ
Vladimir Rykov
Rachel SandmanΔ
Alex Shum*

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Kristin Velicer, *Acting Associate Principal*
Minhye Helena Choi,
Acting Assistant Principal
Nancy Beckmann
Mary Garcia Grant
Kazato Inouye
Rena Ishii
Lisa JacksonΔ
Stephanie Larsen
Francesca Manheim
Sarah PetersΔ

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Jessica Nance, *Acting Associate Principal*
Duke Lee, *Acting Assistant Principal*
Alyssa BeckmannΔ
Kent Brauningner
Sean Brumble
Marvin Gruenbaum
Jenifer Houck
Jesse Yukimura

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Richard Hill Chair
Alexander East, *Assistant Principal*
Maria Crosby
John Eadie
Lawrence Figg
Rung Lee*
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Richard Ryan, *Acting Associate Principal*
Jeffrey Kail ‡, *Principal*
Joseph NuñezΔ
Caleb Quillen
Nash Tomey
Keith WymerΔ

FLUTES

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Marylou and John Dodds Turner Chair
Shannon Finney, *Associate Principal*
Kayla Burggraf Michal

PICCOLO

Kayla Burggraf Michal

OBOES

Kristina Fulton, *Principal*
Shirley Bush Helzberg Chair
Alison Chung, *Associate Principal*

CLARINETS

Raymond Santos, *Principal*
Bill and Peggy Lyons Chair
Silvio Guitian, *Associate Principal*
John Klinghammer

E-FLAT CLARINET

Silvio Guitian

BASS CLARINET

John Klinghammer

BASSOONS

Ann Bilderback, *Principal*
Barton P. and Mary D. Cohen Chair
Thomas DeWitt, *Associate Principal*
Maxwell Pipinich

CONTRABASSOON

Thomas DeWitt

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Alberto Suarez, *Principal*
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David Sullivan, *Associate Principal*
Elizabeth Gray
David Gamble
Stephen Multer,
Associate Principal Emeritus

TRUMPETS

Julian Kaplan, *Principal*
James B. and Annabel Nutter Chair
Steven Franklin, *Associate Principal*
Grant SmileyΔ
Brian Rood ‡

TROMBONES

Roger Oyster, *Principal*
Porter Wyatt Henderson,
Associate Principal
Adam Rainey

BASS TROMBONE

Adam Rainey

TUBA

Joe LeFevre, *Principal*
Frank Byrne Chair

TIMPANI

Timothy Jepson, *Principal*
Michael and Susan Newburger Chair

PERCUSSION

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David Yoon, *Associate Principal*

HARP

Katherine Siochi, *Principal*

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Stage Manager

* Non-Rotating Musician

‡ On Leave of Absence

Δ One-Year Member

PROKOFIEV'S FIFTH, WITH TCHAIKOVSKY'S ROCOCO VARIATIONS

Friday and Saturday, February 4-5, 2022 at 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 6, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

HELZBERG HALL, KAUFFMAN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

EDUARDO STRAUSSER, *guest conductor*

ZLATOMIR FUNG, *cello*

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

Othello Overture, op. 93

PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

Variations on a Rococo Theme for Cello and Orchestra, op. 33
Zlatomir Fung, *cello*

INTERMISSION

SERGEI PROKOFIEV

Symphony No. 5 in B-flat Major, op. 100

I. Andante

II. Allegro marcato

III. Adagio

IV. Allegro giocoso

The 2021/22 season is generously sponsored by
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ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

Othello Overture, op. 93 (1892)

15 minutes

Piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, harp and strings.

THE STORY

It would be reasonable to speculate that the genesis of Dvořák's "Nature, Life and Love" concert overtures was a combination of four factors:

- His 50th birthday — an event that often spurs philosophical thoughts on life.
- A new job teaching at the Prague Conservatory and its heady atmosphere of idealistic youth.
- The example of Bedřich Smetana, his Czech compatriot, composing a monumental series of six tone poems comprising *Má vlast* (My Country), seeking to express a grand idea.
- An impending move to the United States to become director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York.

Dvořák's outline was to consider life through three interconnected tone poems that could stand alone or as a triptych under the rubric of "Nature, Life and Love." He initially grouped the works together, but later decided to give each an independent title and opus number: *In Nature's Realm*, op. 91; *Carnival*, op. 92; and *Othello*, op. 93. The vivacious *Carnival Overture* has held sway in the concert hall, relegating the others to infrequent appearances. *Othello* was composed in a relatively brief span from December 1891 to January 1892. All three works were premiered at a concert of the National Theatre Orchestra conducted by Dvořák in Prague's Rudolfinum on April 28, 1892 as part of a farewell tour before his departure to the U.S. Dvořák reprised the triptych at a welcoming concert in Carnegie Hall on October 21, 1892.

THE MUSIC

Shakespeare was an infrequent source of inspiration for Dvořák. An overture based on "Romeo and Juliet," later destroyed by the composer, and the eponymous *Othello Overture* are the only two instances of Shakespearean themes in his music. Further distancing the music from the programmatic elements, Dvořák framed his overture using the time-honored sonata form, not necessarily well-suited to dramatic narrative. The ensuing challenge was to connect the music with the play's storyline and Dvořák took expressive liberties with the form's structural expectations to suit his musical ends. Inferences can be readily drawn from some of the melodic material. Musicologists have extended the connection by virtue of the eleven penciled notations Dvořák added to his own score at various points, noting "They embrace in silent ecstasy," "in the mind of Othello jealousy and revenge begin to grow," and "Othello murders her at the height of his anger," among others.

Despite Shakespeare's compact evocation of love, intrigue, jealousy and ultimate tragedy, it would be foolhardy to try and map the play's entire narrative to Dvořák's music on the basis of such sparse annotations. Indeed, the music stands alone as a dramatic work itself, imbued with beauty, passion, rage and heart-rending sadness. From its soft chorale opening and extended lyrical passages to the crashing orchestral fury that concludes the work, *Othello Overture* is a striking exploration of the human condition. **ETW**



ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (1841-1904)

Known for:

- **Slavonic Dances, op. 46 and 72 (1878/1886)**
- **Cello Concerto (1894)**
- **Symphony No. 9, "From the New World" (1893)**

- Antonín Dvořák was born in Nelahozeves, Bohemia, now in the Czech Republic. While Dvořák's upbringing was underprivileged, his father loved music and played the zither so young Antonín was exposed to a variety of music. His early education took place in a one-room school where the teacher gave Dvořák violin and singing lessons. His musical talent was apparent and at age 12 he moved in with his aunt and uncle to pursue more formal studies, learning organ and piano.
- At age 16, Dvořák moved to Prague and began studying at the Institute for Church Music. Following graduation, he began playing viola in coffee houses and restaurants, eventually becoming principal violist of the new Provisional Czech Theatre.
- Dvořák's early years in Prague were challenging. Because there was little money, he lived with relatives and taught piano lessons to supplement scanty wages as a violist. Despite his impoverished circumstances, he wrote music prolifically yet was completely unknown as a composer.
- Dvořák eventually left the theatre orchestra in order to have more time for composition. He received several Austrian government grants designed to support poor but talented artists and came to the notice of influential Viennese music critic Eduard Hanslick and the composer Johannes Brahms. Both promoted his works and Brahms connected Dvořák with his own publisher, Fritz Simrock, who commissioned a set of Slavonic dances that quickly secured Dvořák's international popularity.
- As his fame spread, Dvořák began traveling to conduct his works, with several extended trips to England. At Tchaikovsky's invitation, Dvořák traveled to Russia in 1890 to conduct some of his orchestral works. He also returned to England for conducting engagements and to receive an honorary doctorate from Cambridge University. He started teaching at the Prague Conservatory in 1891 and then received an offer to teach at the National Conservatory of Music of America in New York City.
- Among the works Dvořák completed while in America were his Cello Concerto, the "American" String Quartet, and the "New World" Symphony, which premiered at Carnegie Hall. Dvořák's enthusiasm for music from the Black community ignited a racial debate played out in the press and academic journals, but he was unequivocal: "It is my opinion that I find a sure foundation in the negro [sic] melodies for a new national school of music."
- The Dvořák family spent the summer of 1893 in Spillville, Iowa, a village with many Czech immigrants. His travels that year also included visits to Omaha, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Chicago and Niagara Falls. The family returned to Prague in 1895 and Dvořák resumed teaching at the Prague Conservatory and composing.
- His final years were marked by the bestowal of honors — Emperor Franz Josef appointed him a member of the Austrian House of Lords — and a withdrawal from public life. He stopped conducting and rarely traveled. There was a huge outpouring of sorrow at his death at age 62 in 1904. **ETW**

PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

Variations on a Rococo Theme for Cello and Orchestra, op. 33 (1876-77)

18 minutes

Solo cello, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns and strings.

THE STORY

Filled with grace and elegance, *Variations on a Rococo Theme* belies its complicated nascence during one of the most difficult periods in Tchaikovsky's life. The composer had married Antonina Milyukova, a former student, in July 1877, seeking a degree of acceptance in a society hostile to his sexual orientation. The marriage was a disaster and Tchaikovsky immediately realized his mistake. He left his wife in Moscow and contrived work in St. Petersburg that required his presence. It was during this time in December 1876 that Tchaikovsky began his first attempt at writing something for cello and orchestra, a piece for his colleague at the Moscow Conservatory, German cellist Wilhelm Fitzenhagen.

He finished the work in January 1877 and prepared an arrangement for cello and piano, giving the manuscript to Fitzenhagen to review and fleeing abroad for the next year in order to recover from his catastrophic marriage. He missed Fitzenhagen's premiere of the piece in Moscow on November 30, 1877, with Nikolai Rubinstein conducting.

When it came time for publication, Fitzenhagen took a far more active role than simply advising Tchaikovsky on writing for cello. He significantly rewrote the cello part, changed the order of the variations and even omitted one variation. When presented with the vastly revised version, Tchaikovsky's publisher Piotr Jurgenson wrote to the composer: "Loathsome Fitzenhagen! He is most insistent on making changes to your cello piece, and he says that you have given him full authority to do so. Heavens! Tchaikovsky revised and corrected by Fitzenhagen!!"

Tchaikovsky was not enamored with the revisions and years later, cellist Anatoly Brandukov related the following:

During one of my visits to Piotr Ilyich, I found him in a terribly irritated state, looking as if he were ill. To my question "What is going on with you?" — Piotr Ilyich pointing at the writing desk said "Fitzenhagen was here. Look what he has done with my composition — he altered everything." When I asked what he was going to do, Piotr Ilyich answered: "Hell with it, let it be as it is!"

THE MUSIC

Variations on a Rococo Theme is vintage Tchaikovsky, overflowing with melody and suffused with charm. The work pays homage to Tchaikovsky's favorite composer, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, evoking the lightness and fanciful ornamentation often associated with Rococo music. Tchaikovsky composed the theme rather than borrowing a melody from the era. Fitzenhagen's revised version of the work offers the theme and seven variations. A brief orchestral introduction establishes an elegant atmosphere for the solo cello statement of the theme. The first two variations are gently filigreed, followed by a soulful variation highlighting the cello's expressive ability. The following variation is gracious and almost coquettish in its playfulness. Tchaikovsky takes the theme through several stylish turns leading to a virtuosic cadenza. The mood becomes poignant before the final variation's thrilling mad dash to the finish. **ETW**



PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)

Known for:

The Nutcracker (1892)

1812 Overture (1880)

Swan Lake (1876)

Symphony No. 6, "Pathétique" (1893)

- Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky was born in Votkinsk, Russia, about 700 miles east of Moscow and 1,200 miles east of St. Petersburg. His father was an engineer and manager of an ironworks; his mother was the descendant of French emigrés. An adept pupil, Tchaikovsky began piano lessons at age 5 and was fluent in French and German by age 6.
- For reasons of practicality Tchaikovsky's parents decided to prepare him for a civil service career. At age 10 he was sent away to boarding school and two years later was admitted to the Imperial School of Jurisprudence in St. Petersburg. All told, he spent nine years studying law, economics, philosophy and finance.
- Tchaikovsky's mother died of cholera in 1854 and he was devastated at the loss. Shortly thereafter he wrote a waltz in her memory, one of his earliest efforts at composition.
- Upon graduation at age 19, Tchaikovsky entered civil service and rapidly advanced. The siren call of music could not be ignored, however, and he began taking music classes in 1861. He resigned from his clerkship at the Ministry of Justice and entered the new St. Petersburg Conservatory in 1862. Following his graduation in 1865, Tchaikovsky embarked on a teaching career at the Moscow Conservatory.
- Dealing with societal rejection of his sexual orientation, Tchaikovsky sought acceptance by marrying 28-year-old Antonina Milyukova, one of his former conservatory students. It was completely disastrous and a nervous breakdown ensued. Weeks later, he fled the marriage and went abroad, writing his brother Anatoly, "Only now, especially after the tale of my marriage, have I finally begun to understand that there is nothing more fruitless than not wanting to be that which I am by nature."
- Tchaikovsky entered a most unusual relationship with Nadezhda von Meck, the wealthy widow of a railway tycoon. She became interested in Tchaikovsky's music and agreed to provide him an annual stipend of 6,000 rubles. This support allowed Tchaikovsky to quit teaching and devote all of his time to composition. The two agreed never to meet but corresponded extensively, exchanging more than 1,000 letters over the course of 14 years, constituting a rich historical record. Facing financial ruin, von Meck ended her support of Tchaikovsky late in 1890. He was extremely angry over the rejection and anguished over the cessation of their correspondence.
- Tchaikovsky began conducting more frequently and even made a triumphant appearance conducting his Coronation March at the dedication of New York's Carnegie Hall in 1891. In October 1893, he conducted the premiere of his Sixth Symphony, "Pathétique", to a lukewarm response. He fell ill a few days later and died, aged 53, never knowing the eventual brilliant success of the work. His death has been attributed to cholera contracted from drinking contaminated water, but persistent rumor over the years has insinuated suicide. The question is unlikely ever to be answered definitively. **ETW**

SERGEI PROKOFIEV

Symphony No. 5, op. 100 (1944)

45 minutes

Piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, E-flat clarinet, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, snare drum, cymbals, triangle, tambourine, tam-tam, wood block, piano, harp and strings.

THE STORY

Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony, his first return to the symphonic form in fourteen years, was composed in the summer of 1944. World War II was still raging in Europe, but Prokofiev enjoyed peace and quiet, as he had been put up by the Soviet government at a retreat for composers 150 miles northeast of Moscow. Prokofiev wrote, "I conceived of it as glorifying the grandeur of the human spirit ... praising the free and happy man — his strength, his generosity, and the purity of his soul ... I cannot say that I deliberately chose this theme. It was born in me and clamored for expression. The music matured within me. It filled my soul." The premiere took place on January 13, 1945 in the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory, conducted by the composer. Soviet forces were readying their march toward Nazi Germany, and artillery were standing by to announce the start of the advance to the citizens of the city. Sviatoslav Richter, an eminent Russian pianist, attended the premiere and described it this way:

The Great Hall was illuminated, no doubt, the same way it always was, but when Prokofiev stood up, the light seemed to pour straight down on him from somewhere up above. He stood like a monument on a pedestal. And then, when Prokofiev had taken his place on the podium and silence reigned in the hall, artillery salvos suddenly thundered forth. His baton was raised. He waited, and began only after the cannons had stopped. There was something very significant in this, something symbolic. It was as if all of us — including Prokofiev — had reached some kind of shared turning point.

The work's uplifting character, combined with the hope that the war was nearing its end, made it an immediate success, and it has remained one of Prokofiev's most popular works.

THE MUSIC

The Symphony's first movement, while slower than a typical symphonic opening movement, nevertheless follows sonata form, with two themes introduced at the beginning (both by the flute), developed in the middle and brought back at the end. The second movement is a scherzo, playful and satirical but with a motoric drive. The slow third movement is the expressive, lyrical heart of the symphony, though not without tragic undertones. A tortured climax precedes the return of the movement's opening theme. The finale begins with an introspective look back at the first movement's melody, then leaps into an energetic rondo that brings back multiple melodies and fragments from earlier movements. The music reaches a frenzy of chromatic glissandos before finishing triumphantly on an orchestral unison. **AJH**

Program notes by A.J. Harbison (AJH) and Eric T. Williams (ETW).



SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891-1953)

Known for:

- **Symphony No. 1 in D Major, "Classical" (1917)**
- ***Peter and the Wolf* (1936)**
- ***Romeo and Juliet* (ballet, rev. 1940)**

- Prokofiev's mother was a pianist, and his earliest exposure to music was hearing her practice Chopin and Beethoven. He wrote his first composition at 5 years old; it was written in the F Lydian mode (all white notes beginning on F), because he was afraid of the black keys.
 - Prokofiev first made his name as a pianist, and often performed his own compositions. His Second Piano Concerto, which he premiered in 1913, caused a scandal; the audience left the hall exclaiming "To hell with this futuristic music! The cats on the roof make better music!"
 - After the Russian Revolution in 1917, Prokofiev left Russia with official permission from the Soviet government. In America he composed his best-known opera, the satire *The Love for Three Oranges*. He also spent time in Paris and Germany.
 - During his time in Paris, Prokofiev and Stravinsky, who had been friends, had a falling out, with Stravinsky becoming "incandescent with rage" and the two almost coming to blows. After a number of years, they patched things up, though Prokofiev disliked Stravinsky's neoclassical music. Stravinsky, for his part, called Prokofiev the greatest Russian composer of the day — after himself.
 - In 1936, Prokofiev returned to the Soviet Union with his family, settling in Moscow. He received criticism for his musical style (though nothing as dangerous as Dmitri Shostakovich's official denunciation, at this point), and subsequently wrote Soviet-approved music for films, operas and the ballet *Romeo and Juliet*. Around the same
- time he composed his sixth, seventh and eighth piano sonatas. His biographer later wrote that Prokofiev "forced himself to compose a cheerful evocation of the nirvana Stalin wanted everyone to believe he had created," but in the sonatas he "expressed his true feelings." Ironically, the seventh and eighth sonatas were awarded Stalin Prizes in 1943 and 1946.
- In 1948, the Politburo issued a resolution denouncing Prokofiev (along with Shostakovich, Aram Khachaturian and other composers) for the crime of "formalism," abandoning the basic principles of classical music for "muddled, nerve-racking" sounds that "turned music into cacophony." Eight of Prokofiev's compositions were banned from performance, and musicians were reluctant to program even works that were not banned.
 - Prokofiev died on March 5, 1953, the same day as Joseph Stalin. Due to the hundreds of thousands of people thronging Red Square to pay respects to the dictator, Prokofiev's coffin had to be carried by hand in the opposite direction and his funeral was attended by only 30 people. Shostakovich was one of them.
 - Fun fact: Prokofiev learned to play chess by the time he was 7 years old, and it remained a passion of his throughout his life. He became friends with the world chess champion José Raúl Capablanca and even beat him in an exhibition game in 1917. **AJH**



Photo by Charles Brooks

EDUARDO STRAUSSER, GUEST CONDUCTOR

Brazilian conductor Eduardo Strausser has gained a reputation for his charismatic stage presence and powerful style on the podium. Successes of the 2019/20 season included concerts and four productions for Staatstheater Hannover including *Tosca*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Hänsel und Gretel* and *Il barbiere di Siviglia*.

Autumn/winter of the 2020/21 season included three important UK debuts with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and the Hallé Orchestra, as well as a return to the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra following a successful debut in 2019. Strausser also will return to conduct the Simón Bolívar Orchestra in Venezuela and Oulu Symphony. He made his

delayed U.S. debut with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in January 2021.

He will join Collegium Musicum Basel in the spring for a program by Viennese classical heavyweights Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert and the Het Gelders Orkest in collaboration with the Nederlandse Reisopera for open air concerts. Previous symphonic highlights have included programs with Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, Deutsche Sinfonie Orchester Berlin, Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, Tampere Philharmonic and Oslo Philharmonic as well as the Staatstheater Darmstadt and Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne.

Previously resident conductor for Teatro São Paulo from 2014 to 2016, Strausser has conducted several operas including *Elektra* and Carlos Gomes' *Fosca*, as well as performances of *The Nutcracker* with the Balé da Cidade de São Paulo and a Stefano Poda production of Mahler Symphony No. 1. Other highlights also include *Die Zauberflöte* with the Meininger Hofkapelle, *La bohème* for Teatro Municipal do Rio de Janeiro and Teatro Verdi di Padova and *Tosca* for Theater Magdeburg.

Besides his studies at the Zurich University of Arts, Strausser has worked with the visionary composer Karlheinz Stockhausen as part of a two-month course in Kürten, Germany. He has also participated in masterclasses with Bernard Haitink and David Zinman in Switzerland and with Kurt Masur in New York. In 2008 Strausser was selected to take part in the prestigious International Forum for Conductors at the Ferienkurse für Neue Musik in Darmstadt, where he had the chance to work closely with composers György Kurtág and Brian Ferneyhough. He is now based in Berlin.

Strausser has worked with a number of top soloists, including Isabelle Faust, Ricard Galliano, Steven Osborne, Barnabas Kelemen and Sergei Krylov, among others. A multi-linguist, he speaks eight languages fluently, including German, Italian, French, Spanish and Hebrew.



ZLATOMIR FUNG, CELLO

The first American in four decades and youngest musician ever to win first prize at the International Tchaikovsky Competition Cello Division, Zlatomir Fung is poised to become one of the preeminent cellists of our time. Astounding audiences with his boundless virtuosity and exquisite sensitivity, the 22-year-old has already proven himself to be a star among the next generation of world-class musicians. A 2020 recipient of an Avery Fisher Career Grant, Fung demonstrates a mastery of the canon and an exceptional insight into the depths of contemporary repertoire.

In the 2021/22 season, Fung performs with orchestras and gives recitals in all corners of the world. Debuts include

La Jolla Chamber Music Society in recital with Richard Fu, multiple programs at ChamberFest Cleveland, Bravo! Vail in a program with Joshua Bell and Shai Wosner, and Aspen Music Festival in a performance of Tchaikovsky's *Variations on a Rococo Theme*. In the fall, he opens Ann Arbor Symphony's season and appeared twice with IRIS Orchestra. He is presented by Harvard Musical Association, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society and Philharmonic Society of Orange County before making his debut at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall with pianist Mishka Rushdie Momen. He returns to Philadelphia Chamber Music Society in January for two evenings with BalletX and the Calidore Quartet to give the Philadelphia premiere of a new work by Anna Clyne and appears with several orchestras including the Kansas City and Greensboro symphonies. He tours Italy, Russia, China and Japan with orchestras and in recital.

In the 2020/21 season, Fung made his Seattle Symphony debut in addition to livestreams presented by University of Delaware, The Phillips Collection, Friends of Chamber Music and many online masterclasses. In the 2019/20 season, he performed at Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall in a joint recital with fellow Tchaikovsky Competition winners. At the Artist Series of Sarasota, Fung performed the complete works for cello and piano by Beethoven. As a chamber musician, Fung performed around the world, opening the season with International Musicians Seminar-Prussia Cove on tour to London's Wigmore Hall, Cornwall, Cambridge, West Sussex and Somerset. During the summer of 2019, Fung performed at Musique de Chambre à Giverny, a chamber music festival in northern France.

A winner of the 2017 Young Concert Artists International Auditions and the 2017 Astral National Auditions, Fung has taken the top prizes at the 2018 Alice & Eleonore Schoenfeld International String Competition, 2016 George Enescu International Cello Competition, 2015 Johansen International Competition for Young String Players, 2014 Stulberg International String Competition and 2014 Irving Klein International Competition. He was selected as a 2016 U.S. Presidential Scholar for the Arts.

Of Bulgarian-Chinese heritage, Fung began playing cello at age 3 and earned fellowships at Ravinia's Steans Music Institute, Heifetz International Music Institute, MusicAlp, and the Aspen Music Festival and School. Fung studied at the Juilliard School under the tutelage of Richard Aaron and Timothy Eddy. Fung has been featured on NPR's "Performance Today" and has appeared on "From the Top" six times. In addition to music, he enjoys cinema, reading and blitz chess.