

Chang Jia Yun Senior Recital



This recital marks a significant milestone in my musical journey — not only the completion of my undergraduate studies, but also a moment of reflection, transformation, and quiet becoming.

The two works presented today— by Gaspar Cassadó and Johannes Brahms — offer contrasting yet deeply connected perspectives on the expressive world of the cello. Together, they trace a path from solitude to dialogue, from inward reflection to shared resonance.

Gaspar Cassadó (1897–1966)



Suite for Solo Cello

Composed in the early 20th century, Cassadó's Suite for Solo Cello stands as both homage and reinvention. Deeply influenced by the legacy of Johann Sebastian Bach, the work adopts the framework of the Baroque suite while transforming it through a distinctly Spanish and modern musical language.

I. Preludio – Fantasia

The suite opens with a free and improvisatory movement, characterized by shifting harmonies and rhetorical gestures. The music unfolds with a sense of spontaneity, as if searching for direction in real time.

Rather than strict structure, Cassadó emphasizes expressive freedom, allowing the cello to explore a wide range of colors and textures. This movement establishes an atmosphere of introspection and fluidity.

II. Sardana (Danza)

The second movement draws from the Catalan folk dance tradition, bringing rhythmic vitality and a grounded, earthy elegance. The music is marked by clear articulation and a strong sense of pulse, reflecting its dance origins.

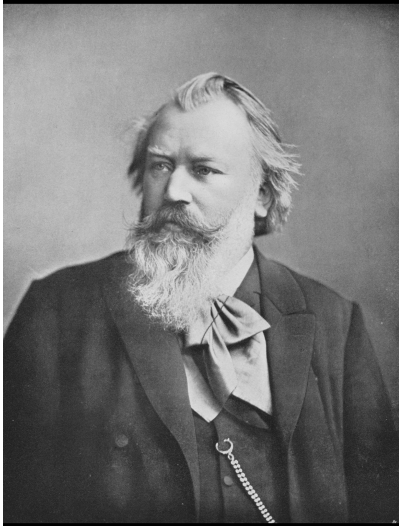
At the same time, the writing demands precision and control, as the performer navigates intricate rhythms and shifting accents. The movement balances folk character with refined musical craftsmanship.

III. Intermezzo e Danza Finale

The final movement combines lyricism with brilliance, leading to a virtuosic and energetic conclusion. Contrasting sections alternate between expressive, singing lines and rhythmically driven passages.

As the music builds, it gathers momentum and intensity, culminating in a fiery and decisive ending. This movement showcases the full technical and expressive capabilities of the cello.

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)



Cello Sonata No. 2 in F Major, Op. 99

Composed in 1886 during a period of artistic maturity, Brahms's Cello Sonata No. 2 in F Major, Op. 99 stands as one of the most powerful and expansive works in the cello repertoire. Unlike his earlier sonata, this work embraces a broader, almost symphonic scope, with the cello and piano functioning as equal partners in a rich and dynamic dialogue.

I. Allegro vivace

The first movement opens with a bold and energetic gesture, immediately establishing a sense of urgency and scale. Rather than presenting a simple melodic line, Brahms constructs a dense and tightly woven musical texture in which both instruments actively engage in shaping the narrative.

The interplay between cello and piano is constant and dynamic, creating a sense of forward motion and structural strength. This movement conveys a spirit of determination and vitality, setting the tone for the entire sonata.

II. Adagio affettuoso

In contrast, the second movement offers a deeply intimate and lyrical space. The long, singing lines of the cello unfold with warmth and tenderness, supported by the piano's delicate harmonic texture.

Here, Brahms reveals a more inward and reflective voice. The music is not overtly dramatic, but rather expresses a quiet sincerity and emotional depth. It invites the listener into a moment of stillness and connection, emphasizing the expressive, vocal qualities of the cello.

III. Allegro passionato

The third movement introduces a striking contrast, characterized by intensity and rhythmic drive. Often described as a scherzo-like movement, it carries a sense of agitation and underlying tension.

The music is marked by sharp accents, restless motion, and dramatic contrasts, creating an atmosphere of inner conflict. This movement pushes the emotional boundaries of the sonata, adding complexity and urgency to the overall structure.

IV. Allegro molto

The final movement brings a sense of clarity and resolution. With its energetic momentum and transparent structure, it releases the tension accumulated in the previous movements.

While still retaining Brahms's characteristic weight and depth, the music feels more open and direct. The dialogue between cello and piano becomes more unified, leading to a conclusion that is both powerful and grounded.

Across its four movements, this sonata unfolds as a journey—from strength and outward expression, through intimacy and tension, toward a final sense of integration and release.

For the performer, it is not only a technical and musical challenge, but also an exploration of balance: between power and vulnerability, structure and freedom, individuality and collaboration.