

# Just Ancient Loops

Maya Beiser\* – Cello

Michael Harrison – Piano

*Just Ancient Loops* brings together virtuoso cellist Maya Beiser and the extraordinary composer and pianist Michael Harrison. Harrison's music is perfect for our times: it's architectural and precise, yet exhilarating and beautiful. It draws on music from ancient Greece and the Renaissance, Indian ragas and minimalism. Complementing Harrison's compositions is music by two composers he reveres: Arvo Part and J.S. Bach.

The program takes its name from the center piece of this concert: *Just Ancient Loops*, a 25 minute musical odyssey that unveils every aspect of the cello - from its most glorious and mysterious harmonics to the earthy rhythmic pizzicatos. The cello becomes an "Uber instrument" - laying down the drones, building rhythmical grooves on top of each other, singing melismatic melodies, and reaching up to the stratosphere as the music evolves and builds into a massive, exhilarating climax.

Juxtaposed with *Just Ancient loops* is the *Suite for Solo Cello in G Major* by J.S. Bach. The cello is tuned in "just Intonation," which requires some adjustments to the original Bach score. The result is a unique and fresh approach to the interpretation of this well-known masterpiece.

Bach/Gounod's famed *Ave Maria*, receives its own surprising interpretation as Harrison accompanies Maya's cello on a specially tuned piano, along with two Raga-preludes inspired by Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*. The inclusion of Arvo Part's *Fratres* and *Spiegel Im Spiegel* in the program, exemplify Part's own exploration of timbre and reverberation and the intrinsic spirituality of his music.

When possible, the concert closes with the breathtaking *Hijaz*, a piece commissioned by 2011 MacArthur "Genius Grant" recipient, conductor Francisco Nunez for female or professional children's choir, solo cello, piano and tabla, which Harrison composed for Maya and the Young People's Chorus of New York City.

\* *Maya Beiser appears courtesy of Bernstein Artists*