

Cyrus Forough

Noted for the “fiery intensity” and “poetic vision” of his playing, Cyrus Forough's reviews comprise a lexicon of superlatives in more than a dozen languages. Of his July 2015 performance of Debussy's Violin Sonata, Jim Lowe wrote, “With a warm sound and deft technique, Forough was an expert musician, utilizing skilled articulations and a broad palette of tonal colors, in delivering Debussy's unique mix of Romanticism and Impressionism.” Critic Donald Isler lauded Mr. Forough's performance of Beethoven Sonata No. 7 in August 2016 as “a very fine performance of a great work,” saying he “played with great flair and stylistic understanding.”

A laureate of the Tchaikovsky International Competition, Mr. Forough also won first prize in the Milwaukee Symphony Violin Competition and was a finalist in the Munich International Violin Competition. He and his wife Steinway Artist Carolyn McCracken, as the Forough/McCracken Duo, won the United States Artistic Ambassador Program's National Violin/Piano Duo Competition. He also holds the World Academy of Arts, Literature, and Media Award in recognition of his contributions to classical music and education.

Mr. Forough's unique succession of studies, in three major international cultural centers with three of the twentieth century's legendary violin masters—Arthur Grumiaux, David Oistrakh and Josef Gingold—has made him a prominent representative of the Franco-Belgian school of violin playing.

When he was five years old, he began his violin studies with his mother, who herself was a graduate of the Royal Conservatory of Music in Brussels, Belgium. First in Liège she had studied under the tutelage of Ernest Chaumont and Leopold Charlier, both distinguished professors of the Franco-Belgian violin school, and subsequently with André Gertler at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels, where she graduated with a First Prize in violin and history of music.

Within the first few years Mr. Forough performed publicly in concerts and on Iranian television. At the age of seven he performed a recital at the Ministry of Arts and Culture recital hall in Tehran, where he played three concertos with piano, namely Vivaldi A minor, Viotti Concerto No. 23 in G major, and Rode Concerto No. 8. At age eight his parents took him to Europe in order for him to further his violin studies with well-known European pedagogues of the time. In Vienna he auditioned for distinguished violinist and pedagogue Ricardo Odnoposoff; in Paris for internationally recognized professor Gabriel Bouillon at the Paris Conservatory and Michelle Auclair; in Salzburg, Austria for André Gertler; and in Brussels for the internationally renowned violinist and professor Arthur Grumiaux, all of whom agreed to take him as their student.

As a result, Cyrus Forough became the youngest student ever to attend the Royal Conservatory of Music in Brussels, admitted at the exceptional age of nine to study with the legendary Belgian violinist Arthur Grumiaux for the first year of his studies. He graduated at age sixteen with a First Prize and High Distinction Medal in violin and at age seventeen with a First Prize with Distinction in chamber music. He then at the age of eighteen became one of only thirteen students chosen by national competition to attend Europe's most renowned school for promising young performers, the Chapelle Musicale Reine Elisabeth, for the 1968–71 session.

During this time he also obtained his Superior Prize with High Distinction in violin from the Brussels Royal Conservatory of Music.

Subsequently, after hearing Mr. Forough perform, the legendary violinist David Oistrakh invited him to pursue post-graduate studies with him at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory, which he attended from January 1973 to January 1976. Upon Mr. Oistrakh's untimely death in October 1974, he completed his studies with David Oistrakh's assistant Mr. Oleh Krysa, who today is a Professor of Violin at the Eastman School of Music. Mr. Forough then attended Indiana University School of Music for two and a half years, where he studied with and was the personal assistant to Professor Josef Gingold, himself a student of the great Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe.

Cyrus Forough has performed in recital, with orchestras, and in chamber music ensembles throughout Europe, Asia, and the Americas, including live broadcasts on radio and television. He has performed and taught at festivals in Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hong Kong, Iran, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Rumania, Russia, Taiwan, Thailand, the United States, Uruguay and Venezuela. His solo concerts for international dignitaries have included command performances for Queen Fabiola and then-Princess Paola of Belgium, the Shah and Queen Farah Pahlavi of Iran, President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, President Hassanali of Trinidad and Tobago, and President Kreiske of Austria. He also gave a special performance in Bangkok for the birthday celebration of Queen Sirikit of Thailand.

Mr. Forough has worked with conductors such as Rudolf Barshai, Sidney Harth, Alan Heatherington, Daniel Hege, Zdenek Kosler, Farhad Mechat, Paul Polivnick, Alexander Rahbari, Vladimir Sirenko, Adrian Sunshine, Loris Tjeknavorian, André Vandernoot, and Ronald Zollman, amongst others.

He has performed at numerous summer festivals such as the Weimar Festival in Germany, the Plovdiv Music Festival in Bulgaria, the International Schubert Festival at Indiana University, and the American Sacred Music Festival in Milwaukee, invited there by composer and conductor Lukas Foss.

Mr. Forough has championed contemporary music throughout his career. He gave the Tehran Symphony Orchestra's premiere of the Shostakovich First Violin Concerto in 1975 with conductor Adrian Sunshine. In 1985, he gave the Milwaukee Symphony's premiere of that same concerto under the baton of Paul Polivnick. Among other performances of contemporary works, in 2010 he performed Witold Lutosławski's *Chain 2, Dialogue for Violin & Orchestra* with the Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic under Ronald Zollman. Mr. Forough has also performed the works of composers including Erberk Eryilmaz, Alan Fletcher, Lukas Foss, Ramin Heydarbeygi, Otto Luening, Alireza Mashayekhi, Behzad Ranjbaran, Amir Mahyar Tafreshitour, and Reza Vali, including Vali's *Khojasteh* "Majestic", a duo for violin and cello. This work was dedicated to Cyrus Forough, who gave the premier at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. in January 2013. He is also the dedicatee of Alan Fletcher's *Woman Holding a Balance*, which he premiered in 2011 at the National Gallery.

In September 2016, Mr. Forough recorded Alireza Mashayekhi's fourth violin concerto with the Ukraine National Symphony, Vladimir Sirenko conducting. Mashayekhi's fourth and fifth violin concertos and his fourth Violin and Piano Sonata are dedicated to Cyrus Forough. He will give the world premiere of the sonata along with other Mashayekhi compositions dedicated

to him, including the transcriptions for violin of *Sonata Electronica* and *Tonalian*, in a November 2017 recital at the ISSUE Project Room in Brooklyn, NY.

The Forough/McCracken Duo performed William Kraft's *Double Play* with orchestra, and premiered the Violin and Piano Sonata of Shostakovich and *Central Park Reel* by Lukas Foss in numerous cities in the United States, the Caribbean, and South America.

Called "musical treasures of absolute mastery," the Forough/McCracken Duo has charmed and captivated audiences with the artistry of their unique duo partnership. They have performed in many concert venues, including the Kennedy Center, the Phillips Collection, the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, and others.

As Artistic Ambassadors of the United States, they concertized in many countries, performing in recitals and with orchestras, giving master classes and interviews, participating in symposiums and discussions at universities and conservatories, and giving benefit recitals for anti-drug education/rehab and Down syndrome research foundations, all for the purpose of fostering goodwill and cultural understanding between people and nations.

Mr. Forough's dedication to teaching and his skill at communicating his art have earned him a reputation as a sought-after and highly effective violin pedagogue. Having studied on three continents with some of the greatest violin virtuosos of the twentieth century, he is one of the living links to the great Franco-Belgian school of violin playing and pedagogy.

At present he is a full-time tenured Professor of Violin at Carnegie Mellon University's School of Music in Pittsburgh. Mr. Forough has previously taught at several other universities and was an Artist Faculty member of the Music Institute of Chicago's Academy for the Gifted. He was also a visiting professor at the Eastman School of Music in 2009, 2010, and 2015.

Mr. Forough's former students are members of professional orchestras worldwide, including the Royal Danish Opera Orchestra (concertmaster) in Copenhagen, Denmark; National Symphony of Argentina in Buenos Aires (concertmaster); Dallas Symphony Orchestra (associate concertmaster); Chicago Symphony Orchestra; Cleveland Orchestra; Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra; Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra; Buffalo Philharmonic; Naples Philharmonic (Florida); Calgary Symphony Orchestra; Hong Kong Sinfonietta; and many others. Former students are members of chamber ensembles such as the JACK Quartet and the Palladian Ensemble, amongst others.

Mr. Forough's college and pre-college students have also received first prizes, awards, and other prizes in many international and national competitions. Among these are Finalist and "Public Prize" at the Sibelius International Violin Competition, the Paganini Award at the Indianapolis International Violin Competition, Prizewinner at the Menuhin International Violin Competition, "Best Talent" at the Sarasate International Violin Competition, Wieniawski International Violin Competition (3rd round), and prizewinner at the Henryk Szeryng International Competition in Mexico. His students have won numerous first and other prizes at competitions in the United States such as the Washington International Competition for Strings, the Johansen International, the Klein International String Competition, the Stulberg International String Competition, the Cooper International Violin Competition, the Lynn National Competition, and the Illinois Bell Young People's Concerto Competition, performing live on television with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Forough's students have also taken first prizes at the Fischhoff, Rembrandt, and countless other violin and chamber music competitions.

Numerous pre-college students have been chosen to perform on "From the Top" including at Carnegie Hall, New York, and throughout the nation broadcast on radio and television. His students have included winners of the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts and a Presidential Scholar.

In the summer of 2017, Mr. Forough will return as a faculty member at the Summit Music Festival in Pleasantville, New York, to perform and teach. He has also been on the faculty at numerous other summer music festivals. U.S. destinations have included the Beverly Hills International Music Festival (California), Bowdoin International Music Festival (Brunswick, Maine), Indiana University String Academy (Bloomington, Indiana), Killington Music Festival (Rutland, Vermont), Madeline Island (Wisconsin), Meadowmount Summer School of Music (New York), and the Northwestern University Summer Violin Institute (Evanston, Illinois). Internationally, he has been on the faculty at the Cambridge International String Academy (Cambridge, Great Britain), Chateau de Champ Music Festival (Paris, France), International Music Festival Montpellier (France), Niagara International Chamber Music Festival (Canada), Pilsen International Music Academy (Czech Republic), Schlern International Music Festival (Italy), and Sulzbach-Rosenberg International Music Festival (Germany).

Mr. Forough has been an adjudicator for competitions including the Stulberg International Competition and the Sorantin International String Competition, and has conducted master classes at the aforementioned summer festivals as well as at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Northwestern University, the Cleveland Institute of Music, Beijing Central Conservatory, Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Guangzhou Xinghai Conservatory of Music, Peabody Institute Preparatory, Mount Royal College-Academy "Program for Gifted Youth" in residence in Calgary, Canada, the Glenn Gould School of the Toronto Royal Conservatory of Music, and many others. In March 2016 he gave a master class and violin recital as part of the A.I. Lack Master Class series at the University of Houston's Moore School of Music.

Mr. Forough performs on the 1718 "Wilmotte" Antonius Stradivarius.