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**SANTIAGO CAÑÓN-VALENCIA**

**Cello**

Colombian cellist Santiago Cañón-Valencia is a prolific soloist, composer, commissioner, recording artist, painter and photographer described as "technically flawless… totally under the skin of the composers’ idioms" (The Strad). A 2022 BBC Next Generation Artist, Cañón-Valencia was born in Bogotá in 1995 and made his orchestral debut as a soloist when he was six years old with the Orquesta Filarmónica de Bogotá, blossoming into an accomplished musician praised as “an artist from whom sound and texture flow with ease and authenticity” (The Whole Note) and “one of the most promising young cellists” (Forbes Colombia).

Among his many accolades, Cañón-Valencia was Silver Medalist and “Audience Favorite” at the 2019 XVI International Tchaikovsky Competition; recipient of the 2018 Starker Foundation Award; Third Prize honoree at the 2017 Queen Elisabeth International Competition; First Prize winner at the Carlos Prieto International Cello Competition, Beijing International Music Competition, Gisborne International Music Competition, and Lennox International Young Artists Competition; and a major prize-winner of the Sphinx, Casals, Johansen, Cassadó, and Adam Competitions.

Cañón-Valencia’s international solo career has taken him around the world to perform with such orchestras as Mariinsky Orchestra with Valery Gergiev, Frankfurt Radio Orchestra with Christoph Eschenbach, Brussels Philharmonic with Stephane Deneve, SWR Symphonieorchester with Andris Poga, Saint Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra with Nikolai Alexeev, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Antwerp Symphony with Muhai Tang and Moscow Soloists Chamber Orchestra with Yuri Bashmet, as well as all of the major orchestras in his native Colombia.

Upcoming highlights include performances throughout Europe, including his debut at London’s Wigmore Hall and a recital at St. George’s Bristol with pianist Naoko Sonoda; New Generation Artist Showcase concerts and broadcasts with BBC Symphony Orchestra with conductor Pierre Bleuse in London and Ireland’s Ulster Orchestra led by Jac Van Steen; a solo recital at Italy’s Teatro Massimo; debuts with the Danish Chamber Orchestra at the Cartagena Festival and the Belgrade Philharmonic; and appearances with the Latvian National Orchestra, Spain’s RTVE Orchestra at Teatro Monumental, and Serbia’s Belgrade Philharmonic.

In the U.S., he appears as Guest Artist at the International Cello Institute in Minnesota, performs recitals at San Diego’s Athenaeum Music & Arts Library and Massachusetts’s Shalin Liu Performance Center, and returns to Alabama Symphony Orchestra with frequent collaborator Carlos Izcaray. He will also perform two dates in South Korea at the Seosomun Shrine History Museum in Seoul as part of the Mostly Cello Festival before returning to Colombia for two release concerts celebrating his latest album, *Ascenso*, at Teatro Metropolitano and Teatro Mayor and a performance with National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia. In summer 2024, he celebrates the 100th birthday of Janos Starker in events at Lotte Concert Hall with Seoul Philharmonic in Korea and Suntory’s Blue Rose Hall in Japan.

Passionate about collaboration with living composers, Cañón-Valencia performed the world premiere of Carlos Izcaray’s commissioned cello concerto *Stringmaster* as the featured soloist with Alabama Symphony Orchestra. He gave the Colombian premiere of Ginastera’s Cello Concerto No. 2 with National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia, premiered Jorge Pinzón’s Cello Concerto “Rapsodia a los 4 Elementos” at Cartagena International Music Festival, and premiered Gulda’s Cello Concerto in Auckland, New Zealand with Auckland Chamber Orchestra.

As a recording artist, Cañón-Valencia enjoys immersing himself in both known and unknown works, with a particular interest in commissioning new pieces, arranging pieces, and writing his own music. His latest recording *Ascenso*, released in November 2022 on Sono Luminus, showcases pieces arranged and written by Cañón-Valencia himself, as well as works commissioned and written for him by contemporary Colombian composers. Earlier recordings include Santiago’s debut release *Solo*, for which *The Strad* acclaimed him as “technically flawless” and “totally under the skin of the composers’ idioms”; an album with pianist Andrea Lucchesini dedicated to Schubert and Beethoven for the Egea Label; and an album of Russian cello sonatas and popular pieces of the cello repertoire with pianist Katherine Austin for the Atoll label.

Cañón-Valencia’s major musical mentors have been Henryk Zarzycki in Colombia, James Tennant in New Zealand, Andres Diaz in the United States, and Wolfgang Emanuel Schmidt at Kronberg Academy in Germany. He has been sponsored by the Mayra & Edmundo Esquenazi Scholarship through the Salvi Foundation since 2011.

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