

Cleveland Chamber Music Society: A conversation with cellist Edgar Moreau

by Mike Telin



When [Edgar Moreau](#) was four years old he saw a girl playing the cello in an antique shop he was visiting with his father. “That was a long time ago even for me,” the 24-year-old said by telephone from Gainesville, Florida, where he had been performing.

“But I do remember the feeling — It was

physical. I heard the sound and saw the cello, and the little girl who was playing it had her legs and arms wrapped around it. I said to my father that I need to play this instrument. I didn’t know that name of it, I just knew that it was important for me to play it. Since that moment I fell in love with the cello, and every day I spend with the instrument is wonderful.”

On Tuesday, April 17 at 7:30 pm at Plymouth Church, Shaker Heights, the Parisian-born cellist will make his Cleveland Chamber Music Society and Cleveland debut, joined by pianist Jessica Osborne. The program will feature music by Poulenc, Prokofiev, and Franck. CIM faculty cellist Donald Watts will present a pre-concert lecture at 6:30 pm. Tickets are available [online](#).

Moreau said that the three sonatas on the program — two from the 20th century, one Russian and one French, and one from the French Romantic period — give a good representation of the instrument’s repertoire.

“Prokofiev’s *Sonata in C major* is a wonderful piece,” Moreau said. “He wrote it for a young Rostropovich, I think he was in his early 20s. As a young cellist myself, I can say that I do feel that this sonata was written for a young player. There is so much passion in the music, and it is very direct with its feelings.”

The Tchaikovsky Competition second prize-winner described Poulenc’s *Sonata* as humorous, dreamy, wonderfully poetic, and full of colors. “It’s very popular in France because it is part of our national repertoire. That’s why I like to perform it in other countries, and I’m always very proud to play it.”

Moreau said that he enjoys that romantic lyricism of Franck’s *Sonata in A major*, written for violin and transcribed for cello by Jules Delsar. “There are so many phrases that you can express with a lot of sweetness. I think it was a great idea to arrange it for cello.”

The Young Soloist prize-winner in the 2009 Rostropovich Cello Competition said that he is fortunate to get to play with many great pianists in France, but he always looks forward to collaborating with Jessica Osborne. “She is my American pianist — We met in New York City, and when I play here I like to play with Jessica. She knows the piano and cello repertoire really well. She’s focused on collaborative playing, and it’s great to work with someone who is 100% into the chamber music side of her musical life.”

While winning prizes at the Tchaikovsky and Rostropovich helped to launch Moreau’s career in Europe, he credits his First Prize at the 2014 Young Concert Artists International Auditions for boosting his career in the States. “It was interesting because I began my career in Europe very early — I was only 17. I played with all of the big orchestras. But the U.S. and Europe are completely different worlds — you can have a career in Europe but not the U.S., and also the other way around.”

The cellist said that he sought out organizations and competitions that could help him establish himself in the States. “YCA is known world-wide so I auditioned and I won first prize. It was a wonderful jump-start because I’ve gotten to play on the East and West coasts, the Midwest, and the South. It’s been a beautiful experience to meet the public and chamber music societies, and discover a lot of different places.”

Moreau said that an important factor for someone at the beginning of their career is to find a great instrument. He plays on a cello made by Roman luthier David Tecchler in 1711. “I’ve played it since 2009 and it is the cello of my life. I like to say that is a wonderful mix of the clarity of a Stradivarius and the bass of a Montagnana. It is so

important to find your musical partner and begin to build that relationship. I'm very happy and proud to play it."

Wrapping up our conversation, I ask Edgar Moreau how he spends his time when he is not playing the cello. "I am a huge sports fan and a [CrossFit](#) fanatic. Even when I travel I try to drop in on the classes. I did that in Pittsburgh and here in Gainesville. I've found a lot of motivation from doing it. I'm also a big foodie. I am French, so I like to discover the restaurants in the Michelin book. And when I travel I search the Internet for the best places to eat. Of course, when I am home I like to spend time with friends and be close to my family. But I'm pretty normal."

Photo: Matt Dine

Published on ClevelandClassical.com April 12, 2018.

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