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ELLEN TAAFFE ZWILICH'S CONCERTO FOR CELLO AND ORCHESTRA: WORLD PREMIERE PERFORMANCES BY ZUILL BAILEY AND THE SOUTH FLORIDA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CONDUCTED BY SEBRINA MARÍA ALFONSO – MARCH 5, 7, 8, 2020, IN FORT LAUDERDALE, MIAMI, AND KEY WEST

**Zwilich's Double Concerto for Violin and Cello will be performed by The
Symphonia in Boca Raton, James Judd, conductor, on February 9**



Ellen Taaffe Zwilich ([photo](#) by Bill Keefrey), Zuill Bailey, Sebrina María Alfonso

One of America's most honored composers – she was the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for music, in 1983 for her Symphony No. 1 – Ellen Taaffe Zwilich has written many works for solo instrument (or instruments) and orchestra, 14 of which bear the word “concerto” in the title. But she had not written a work for cello and orchestra until now. **Concerto for Cello and Orchestra by Ellen Taaffe Zwilich** will be given its world premiere performances by the Grammy Award-winning cellist Zuill Bailey and the South Florida Symphony Orchestra conducted by Music Director Sebrina María Alfonso on March 5, 2020, at the Broward Center in Fort Lauderdale, FL; March 7 at Temple Israel of Greater Miami; and March 8 at the Tennessee Williams Theatre in Key West.

Ellen Taaffe Zwilich is a Miami native who was elected to the Florida Artists Hall of Fame – alongside such members as Ray Charles and Ernest Hemingway.

“One of the things I love about the cello,” says Zwilich, “is that it has virtually the entire range of the human voice--from the lowest male voice to the highest soprano (I particularly like its

mezzo soprano). But I sometimes refer to string instruments as 'singers on steroids' because of the power they give to a composer to explore virtuosity as well as expressivity.

"My Cello Concerto engages both the lyrical, singing nature of the instrument and its technical possibilities. Throughout the piece, the orchestra plays a significant role with many interactions, including some unusual dialogues (e.g. between the cello and a trumpet)."

The work was commissioned by the South Florida Symphony Orchestra, and Zwilich notes that "It is dedicated to conductor Sebrina María Alfonso and cellist Zuill Bailey, and written in memory of Leonard Rose and Mstislav Rostropovich," both legendary cellists.

Zwilich's Double Concerto for Violin and Cello will receive a performance in South Florida a month before the Cello Concerto's premiere – by The Symphonia, with soloists Elissa Lee Koljonen, violin, and Yumi Kendall, cello, conducted by James Judd, at the Roberts Theater in Boca Raton on Sunday, February 9, 2020. (See listings below.)

At a time when the musical offerings of the world are more varied than ever before, few composers have emerged with the unique personality of **Ellen Taaffe Zwilich**. Her music is widely known because it is performed, recorded, broadcast, and – above all – listened to and liked by all sorts of audiences the world over. Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians states: "There are not many composers in the modern world who possess the lucky combination of writing music of substance and at the same time exercising an immediate appeal to mixed audiences. Zwilich offers this happy combination of purely technical excellence and a distinct power of communication."

Ellen Taaffe Zwilich is a prolific composer in almost all media, and her works have been performed by most of the leading American orchestras and by major ensembles abroad. Her works include five symphonies and a string of concertos commissioned and performed by the nation's top orchestras. Among her many honors are membership in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 1995, she was named to the first Composer's Chair in the history of Carnegie Hall, and she was designated Musical America's Composer of the Year for 1999. www.zwilich.com

Zuill Bailey is an internationally renowned soloist, recitalist, and teacher. He performed the U.S. premiere of Nico Muhly's Cello Concerto and the world premieres of works by composers such as Lowell Lieberman, Phillip Lasser, Roberto Sierra, and Benjamin Wallfisch. Bailey won a best solo performance Grammy Award in 2017 for his live recording of *Tales of Hemingway* by Michael Daugherty. Zuill Bailey is Artistic Director of El Paso Pro Musica, (Texas), the Sitka Summer Music Festival, (Alaska), the Northwest Bach Festival (Washington), the Mesa Arts Center Series (Arizona) and Professor of Cello at the University of Texas at El Paso. www.zuillbailey.com

Born and raised in Key West, SFSO Music Director **Sebrina María Alfonso** in 2002 became the first Cuban American conductor invited to conduct Cuba's premier orchestra, the National

Orchestra of Cuba. She has also received acclaim conducting ensembles including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the San Jose Symphony, the San Antonio Symphony, the Pacific Symphony, the Prague Radio Symphony, and the Women's Philharmonic. A champion of contemporary works, Alfonso is also a composer; her work *Freedom Crossing* was premiered to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Mariel Cuban boat-crossing in which thousands risked their lives to gain freedom. Currently, she is collaborating with Thomas Dubois Hormel in creating a ballet with the Martha Graham Dance Company.

www.southfloridasymphony.org/biography/

The **South Florida Symphony Orchestra**, founded by Maestra Sebrina María Alfonso in 1997, has developed into a cultural institution serving all of South Florida, ranging from Palm Beach to Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe County. Recent milestones include recognition in Broward County as a "Major Cultural Institution," one of only a handful of organizations to be so honored, and the orchestra has been recognized as "Special Presentations Partner" with the Broward Center for the Performing Arts. The South Florida Symphony Orchestra is a pioneer in its commitment to symphonic music for underserved communities. Its "Symphony in the Schools" program, begun in 1997, facilitates engagement with the arts for culturally underserved students and their families. The Symphony has touched the lives of over 50,000 students since its inception. www.southfloridasymphony.org

[Sunday, February 9, 2020, at 3:00 pm](#)

Roberts Theater at Saint Andrew's School, Boca Raton, FL

THE SYMPHONIA

James Judd, conductor

Elissa Lee Koljonen, violin

Yumi Kendall, cello

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN Overture from *The Creatures of Prometheus*

ELLEN TAAFFE ZWILICH Double Concerto for Violin and Cello

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 5

[Thursday, March 5, 2020, at 7:30 pm](#)

Broward Center for the Performing Arts, Fort Lauderdale, FL

[Saturday, March 7, 2020, at 7:30 pm](#)

Temple Israel Miami, Miami, FL

[Sunday, March 8, 2020, at 7:30 pm](#)

Tennessee Williams Theatre, Key West, FL

SOUTH FLORIDA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Sebrina María Alfonso, conductor

Zuill Bailey, cello

ZWILICH Concerto for Cello and Orchestra (World Premiere)

GOTTSCHECH *Sunset* (World Premiere)

MENDELSSOHN Symphony No. 5, "Reformation"

BEETHOVEN *The Consecration of the House*, Op. 124

January 23, 2020