

Saturday, November 19, 2022

92NY presents Seth Parker Woods: Difficult Grace The World Premiere with Dance by Roderick George

Company: 92NY

Venue: 92NY

Location: New York, NY

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The 92nd Street Y, New York (92NY), one of New York's leading cultural venues, presents the world premiere of cellist Seth Parker Woods' evening-length *Difficult Grace* in a new version with choreographer and dancer Roderick George on November 19, 2022 at 7:30pm ET at the Kaufmann Concert Hall. The concert will also be available for viewing online for 72 hours from time of broadcast. Tickets for both the in-person and livestream options start at \$25 and are available at [92ny.org/event/seth-parker-woods](https://www.92ny.org/event/seth-parker-woods).

Difficult Grace is Woods' semi-autobiographical exploration of identity; past/present histories and personal growth that draws inspiration from the Great Migration; the historic newspaper, *The Chicago Defender*; immigration; and the poetry of Kemi Alabi and Dudley Randall. An evocative, theatrical, and genre-bending collaboration with choreographer/dancer George, *Difficult Grace* features Woods in the triple role of cellist, narrator/guide, and movement artist, performing music written for and with him by Freida Abtan, Monty Adkins, Fredrick Gifford, Ted Hearne, Devonté Hynes, Nathalie Joachim and Pierre Alexandre Tremblay with visual artwork by Jacob Lawrence, Barbara Earl Thomas, Zoë McLean, and Freida Abtan. The production features sound design by Christopher Botta and lighting and visual design by Thomas Dunn.

Difficult Grace is co-presented with 92NY's Harkness Dance Center as part of the Mainstage Series. More information on this series is available at <https://www.92ny.org/dance/performances.aspx>.

In this first season curated by 92NY's new Vice President of Tisch Music Amy Lam, the season will feature 39 events, more than 20 92NY debuts, 31 premieres, and four 92NY commissions. The 22/23 season includes premieres of Joseph Schwanter's guitar quintet *Song of a Dreaming Sparrow*, a song cycle by Anthony Cheung, and works by Laurie Anderson, Timo Andres, Marcos Balter, Christopher Cerrone, Nicholas DiBerardino, Reena Esmail, inti figgis-vizueta, John Glover, Ted Hearne, Fred Hersch, Stephen Hough, Jimmy López, Missy Mazzoli, Nico Muhly, Angélica Negrón, Mary Prescott, Caroline Shaw, Sarah Kirkland Snider, Darian Donovan Thomas, Scott Wollschleger, Pamela Z, and more.

Select Highlights:

This season marks the first time 92NY is presenting a fully integrated concert season across genres, including performances by Kate Baldwin, Joshua Bell, Regina Carter, Angela Hewitt, Larisa Martinez, Branford Marsalis, Kelli O'Hara, Eric Owens, Pepe Romero, Caroline Shaw, Sir Andrés Schiff, Daniil Trifonov, and Jessica Vosk.

The World Premiere of a 92NY-commissioned piece from composer Jimmy López, performed by J'Nai Bridges and the Catalyst Quartet.

An in-depth two-day Julius Eastman retrospective featuring LA-based music collective Wild Up in three concerts, as well as exhibits, and panel discussions with Eastman friends and scholars examining the life of one of the 20th century's most iconoclastic voices.

The Bach Collegium Japan, conducted by Masaaki Suzuki with baritone Roderick Williams

92NY's signature series exploring the American songbook, *Lyrics and Lyricists*, continues to explore the best of Broadway, while also highlighting significant contributions to American culture by singer-songwriters across a variety of musical genres such as Marvin Gaye, Joni Mitchell, Nina Simone, the Mamas and the Papas, and more.

Two co-presentations in a collaboration with the World Music Institute featuring Ladysmith Black Mambazo and *Songs for Babyn Yar*, originally produced by UK's Dash Arts.

Two performances as part of an ongoing partnerships with The Curtis Institute of Music.

Jazz, which has been a staple of 92NY's Tisch season since Thelonius Monk and Charles Mingus took to the stage in 1955, will be performed by world-class musicians like Branford Marsalis, Fred Hersch, and Regina Carter not just within the renowned *Jazz in July* series, but throughout the year.

About the Artists

Hailed by *The Guardian* as "a cellist of power and grace" who possesses "mature artistry and willingness to go to the brink," cellist Seth Parker Woods has established his reputation as a versatile artist and innovator across multiple genres. His projects delve deep into our cultural fabric, reimagining traditional works and commissioning new ones to propel classical music into the future. Woods is a recipient of the 2022 Chamber Music America Michael Jaffee Visionary Award.

In the 2022-2023 season, Woods premieres a new version of his evening-length, multimedia tour de force *Difficult Grace* at 92Y, UCLA, and Chicago's Harris Theater; curates and performs a program honoring the centennial of composer George Walker at The Phillips Collection in Washington D.C.; premieres Freida Abtan's *My Heart is a River*, commissioned by the Seattle Symphony; and performs a world premiere by Anna Thorvaldsdóttir at Carnegie Hall as part of Claire Chase's *Density* Series. The Great Northern Festival in Minneapolis will present Woods in his critically acclaimed performance installation, *Iced Bodies*, in which Woods, in a wetsuit, plays an obsidian ice cello.

Recital appearances this season include concerts with pianist Andrew Rosenblum at Dumbarton Oaks in D.C., Boston's Isabella Gardner Museum, and The Wallis Annenberg Center in Beverly Hills, and a return to his former home Brussels for a solo recital at Das Haus. He also tours to Washington Performing Arts, Krannert Center, Stanford Live, California Center for the Arts, Count Basie Center for the Arts, Auburn University, and Emory University with the Chad Lawson Trio. In addition, Woods will hold residencies at Montclair State University and Oberlin Conservatory. The season will also see the release of a new solo album on Cedille Records and the soundtrack of the PBS documentary *The U.S. and the Holocaust* – a film by Ken Burns, Lynn Novick, and Sarah Botstein – to which Woods contributed.

In addition to solo performances, he has appeared with the ICTUS Ensemble (Brussels, BE), Ensemble L'Arsenale (IT), zone Experimental (CH), Basel Sinfonietta (CH), Ensemble LPR, Orchestra of St. Luke's, the Atlanta and Seattle Symphonies, and in chamber music with violinist Hilary Hahn and pianist Andreas Haefliger. A fierce advocate for contemporary arts, Woods has collaborated and worked with a wide range of artists ranging from the likes of Louis Andriessen, Elliott Carter, Heinz Holliger, G. F. Haas, Helmut Lachenmann, Klaus Lang, and Peter Eötvös to Peter Gabriel, Sting, Lou Reed, Dame Shirley Bassey, and Rachael Yamagata to such visual artists as Ron Athey, Vanessa Beecroft, Jack Early, Adam Pendleton, and Aldo Tambellini. In the 2021-2022 season, he premiered concertos by Rebecca Saunders and Tyshawn Sorey.

His debut solo album, *asinglewordisnotenough* (Confront Recordings-London), has garnered great acclaim since its release in November 2016 and has been profiled in *The New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *LA Times*, *The Guardian*, *5against4*, *I Care If You Listen*, *Musical America*, *Seattle Times*, and *Strings Magazine*, amongst others.

Woods recently joined the faculty of the Thornton School of Music at The University of Southern California as Assistant Professor of Practice - Cello and Chamber Music. He previously served on the faculties of the University at Buffalo, University of Chicago, Dartmouth College, and the Chicago Academy of the Arts and as Artist in Residence at the University of Miami's Frost School of Music and Northwestern University - Center for New Music. Woods holds degrees from Brooklyn College, Musik Akademie der Stadt Basel, and a PhD from the University of Huddersfield. In the 2020-21 season, he was an Artist in Residence with the Kaufman Music Center, and from 2018-2020 he served as Artist in Residence with Seattle Symphony and Creative Consultant for the interactive concert hall, Octave 9: Raisbeck Music Center.

Seth Parker Woods is a Pirastro Artist and endorses Pirastro Perpetual Strings worldwide. Learn more at www.sethparkerwoods.com.

Roderick George, born in Houston, Texas, studied dance at Ben Stevenson's Houston Ballet Academy. Roderick continued to develop his skill by exploring other techniques at The Alvin Ailey School, Miami City Ballet, LINES Professional Program and the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Houston, TX. Before starting his professional career, he was a bronze winner of the Youth American Grand Prix in New York City in 2005 and was elected as a Presidential Scholar under the YoungArts Foundation in 2003, where he performed for the US President. Roderick joined Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet in 2005 and also danced with Sidra Bell Dance NY, and the Kevin Wynn Collection, until he decided to move abroad to Switzerland where he joined the Basel Ballet/ Theater Basel and was later a guest with the Goteborg Operan DansKompani. In 2014, Roderick joined The Forsythe Company in Frankfurt, Germany where he learnt and shared his greatest moments with William Forsythe and the artists of TFC. His career has embraced the collaborations of his work and other great choreographers such as Peeping Tom, Jorma Elo, Jerome Bel, Jacopo Godani, William Forsythe, Johan Inger, Jiří Kylián, Sharon Eyal, Ohan Naharin, Benoit Swan-Pouffer, Richard Wherlock, Tino Seghal and many others. In addition, Roderick has created works for Los Angeles Contemporary Dance Company (LACDC), Ballett Basel, Springboard Danse Montreal, the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA), Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre (CCDT), MOVE NYC, University of Utah, SUNY Purchase, Boston Conservatory at Berklee and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago Choreographic Intensive. His teachings have been explored in institutions such as Codarts Rotterdam, Ballet Prejlocaj, Marameo in Berlin, SUNY Purchase, Gibney Dance and Company, Abraham In Motion, LACDC, CCDT, MOVE NYC, HSPVA, the DAF Program in Rome, University of Houston, LINES Trainee Program, Boston Conservatory at Berklee, SALT Dance Company, The Juilliard School, NYU Tisch, Marymount Manhattan Dance Department, Hollins University, and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago.

About The 92nd Street Y, New York: The 92nd Street Y, New York (92NY) is a world-class center for the arts and innovation, a convener of ideas, and an incubator for creativity. 92NY offers extensive classes, courses and events online including live concerts, talks and master classes; fitness classes for all ages; 250+ art classes, and parenting workshops for new moms and dads. The 92nd Street Y, New York is transforming the way people share ideas and translate them into action all over the world. All of 92NY's programming is built on a foundation of Jewish values, including the capacity of civil dialogue to change minds; the potential of education and the arts to change lives; and a commitment to welcoming and serving people of all ages, races, religions, and ethnicities. For more information, visit www.92NY.org.

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