

Reflecting on yo-yo ma

Business



From the start of the mid 1500's, people have been trying to master the art of playing the Italian derived violincello. While many became bequeathed with a gift for playing the instrument over the centuries, no one came close to a modern cellist prodigy named Yo-Yo Ma.

Over the years, this man has conquered every triumph in learning the instrument, and has opened the world's eyes to the diversities of the lyrical and melodious cello. Born in Paris, Yo-Yo Ma showed promising results as a string player at an early age. By the time he was four he had worked his way through the violin and viola and was looking forward to playing a bigger instrument. Although desiring the bass, he compromised on the cello and started his instruction under his father. Within a year, Ma was performing before prestigious audiences such as President John F.

Kennedy. His family soon moved to New York and at age nine he attended Julliard School under the mentorship of Leonard Rose. Shortly thereafter, Ma moved on to Harvard University where he received his bachelor's degree in 1976. As Mr. Ma grew older he became a well-known concert cellist, and performed with many prominent orchestras all around the globe.

On two precious instruments (a 1733 Montagnana from Venice and a 1712 Davidoff Stradivarius) he has ventured past the classical genre and explored a vast majority of different styles such as Brazilian music, Chinese melodies and American Bluegrass. Throughout all the concerts he has recorded over 75 different albums, including more than 15 Grammy Award winners. These include "Appalachia Waltz" and "Appalachian Journey" with Mark O'Connor and Edgar Meyer, and "Hush" with Bobby McFerrin. He still remains one of

the best selling recording artists in the classical genre, and has been a Sony recording artist for over 30 years. To this day Yo-Yo Ma is still center stage at many concerts but has transitioned into a lifestyle filled with taking part in The Silk Road Project in which he established in 1998. This organization was meant to inform people about different cultures art forms and disciplines, through a new type of music that could connect people around the world.

So far this flourishing group has commissioned and performed over 70 new musical and multimedia works and continues to expand. Another thing Yo-Yo Ma enjoys doing is taking part in ensembles, such as “ The Goat Rodeo”, which consists of Stuart Duncan, Edgar Meyer, and Chris Thile. Four years ago, Ma had the privilege to perform alongside fellow musicians during President Obama’s inauguration. On November 17, 2010, President Obama named Yo-Yo Ma a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom. “ The Medal of Freedom is the Nation’s highest civilian honor, presented to those who have made especially meritorious contributions to the security or national interests of the United States, to world peace, or to cultural or other significant public or private endeavors” (White House Press Release).

When President Obama was asked to comment on Yo-Yo Ma, he indicated that he was surprised that Mr. Ma had not received the prestigious medal earlier because “ everyone loves Yo-Yo Ma”. These words still ring true as Mr. Ma is one of our country’s most beloved artists and will be for years to come.