



## THOMAS MESA, cello



Thomas Mesa, Cuban-American cellist, has established himself as one of the most charismatic, innovative, and engaging performers of his generation. He was the winner of the \$50,000 First Prize in the 2016 Sphinx Competition; the Thaviu Competition for String Performance (Chicago, 2013); 2017 Astral National Auditions; and the Alhambra Orchestra Concerto Competition. He has appeared as soloist with major orchestras, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, The Cleveland Orchestra, Santa Barbara Symphony, Southwest Florida Symphony Orchestra. Highlights for the 2021/2022 Season include the world premiere of Jessie Montgomery's *Divided for solo cello and orchestra* at most major venues across the U.S., the premiere of *MIRAGE* for cello and orchestra by Andrea Casarrubios with Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra and curating and performing three of their chamber music concerts, and multiple recording projects released on all streaming platforms. Recently, Thomas was featured as the cover story of the September/October, 2020 issue of *Strings Magazine*.

As a recitalist, Thomas has been featured at the Mainly Mozart Festival in Miami, The Academy of Arts and Letters, Bargemusic, University of Miami's Signature Series, Myra Hess Memorial Concert Series, Columbia University, Flagler Museum, Carnegie Hall, two appearances at the U.S. Supreme Court, guest artist at The

Heifetz Institute, California Center for the Arts, Meadowmount School of Music, Strad for Lunch Series, International Beethoven Project, Perlman Music Program Alumni Recital, and major universities across the United States.

As a recording artist, Thomas has multiple projects in collaboration with PARMA Recordings, including an album called *Division of Memory* to be released in 2021 on all streaming platforms. Thomas was featured on the GRAMMY-nominated album, "Bonhoeffer," with the multiple GRAMMY winning group, The Crossing Choir. He has appeared with them as soloist at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in NYC, Longwood Gardens, The Winter Garden, and the Theological Seminary in NYC. Thomas and The Crossing Choir have also collaborated on the U.S. premiere of "Astralis" for choir and solo cello by renowned composer Wolfgang Rihm and have more collaborations/premieres scheduled for future seasons.

As an ensemble musician, Thomas has been on tours with Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and is the principal cellist of Sphinx Virtuosi who play every year on tour at almost every major venue across the United States. He is also the cellist of the St. Petersburg Piano Quartet, collaborates with Jupiter Chamber Players, and has toured with Itzhak Perlman both nationally and internationally.

Starting in the Fall of 2021, Thomas will be the cello professor at Purchase Conservatory of Music (SUNY). He has given masterclasses at institutions such as U.C Berkeley, Boston Conservatory, Northwestern University, DePaul University, University of Nevada-Las Vegas, University of Miami, Meadowmount School of Music, Walnut Hill School and has held faculty positions at Sphinx Performance Academy, The Heifetz Institute's PEG Program, Music Mountain Festival and School, Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, Montecito International Music Festival, St. Petersburg International Music Academy, The Mozart Academy at John Jay College in New York City.

Thomas Mesa received his BM from The Juilliard School, MM from Northwestern University, and is a doctoral candidate at Manhattan School of Music. His principal teachers were Timothy Eddy, Julia Lichten, Hans Jorgen Jensen, Mark Churchill, Ross Harbaugh, and Wells Cunningham. He has played a gorgeous cello for ten years made by Richard Tobin made in 1820. This cello was used to record soundtracks for the first movies ever created.

*When editing please do not delete references to Astral.*

SEPTEMBER 2021 (Please destroy any previously dated material)

[astralartists.org/artist/thomas-mesa](https://astralartists.org/artist/thomas-mesa)



## THOMAS MESA, cello

Acclaim



"Thomas Mesa...delivered a dramatic performance...grounded in storytelling, as great musical performances often are....it was clear that Mesa had an ability most string players covet....With Mesa, the instrument was flush across all four strings, with the lower end never being muddled and the higher end having a richness most cellos do not....Therein lies [Mesa's] success: giving a musical performance that encapsulates the best that good drama has to offer. The emotion Mesa brought to [the program] was always earnest, never over-the-top."

–*Palm Beach Daily News*

"The Cuban American cellist Thomas Mesa spoke at some length before playing Andrea Casarrubios's "Seven" for solo cello, a searching, intense and elegiac tribute to essential workers during the pandemic. The title alludes to the communal ritual of applauding, shouting and banging pots and pans every night at 7 p.m. for those heroes. Mesa played it magnificently." – *The New York Times*

"...cellist Thomas Mesa brought out [the Debussy Sonata's] edge and contrasting timbres."  
–*The Philadelphia Inquirer*

Perhaps the most emotionally resonating part of the entire concert was the solo performance of Andrea Casarrubios' "Seven" by principal cellist Thomas Mesa.... "Seven" served as a much-needed reminder that in all hope, our worst days are in the rearview mirror. Woefully deserved, Mesa's rendition was greeted by a standing ovation from the Madison faithful, proving to be among the standout performances of the night."  
–*The Badger Herald*

"Mesa's playing had a musical intensity that was commanding in every detail..."–*New York Concert Review*

"[Mesa] took to Beethoven with ease and enthusiasm. Akin to a puppeteer pulling the strings on a puppet, Mesa's bow crisscrossed the hearty cello's bridge to elicit mesmerizing melodies. As a true master of his art, Mesa would bend to every long note as he conveyed each crescendo with careful intricacy. A colorful performer and personality...Mesa brought Debussy's melancholy and longing alive onstage with each stroke of his bow...Mesa's masterful interpretation breathed every bittersweet note he interpreted through his cello..."

–*The Miami Hurricane*

"A listener with closed eyes would have been hard pressed to distinguish the 26-year-old's shapely, expressive performance with that of another gifted artist two or three times his age."

–*Cleveland Plain Dealer*

[astralartists.org/artist/thomas-mesa](https://astralartists.org/artist/thomas-mesa)