Brinton Averil Smith

Critics have described American cellist Brinton Averil Smith as a *"virtuoso cellist with few equals,"* hailing him*"a proponent of old-school string playing such as that of Piatigorsky and Heifetz"* Smith's debut recording of Miklós Rózsa's Cello Concerto with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra received widespread international critical acclaim, with Gramophone praising Smith as a "*hugely eloquent, impassioned soloist*," and continuing "*The sheer bravura of Smith's reading is infectious.*" while the American Record Guide praised his recording of chamber music of Fauré with Gil Shaham as *"Stunningly beautiful,"* continuing *"I cannot imagine a better stylistic match for Shaham."* Of Mr. Smith's most recent recording for Naxos, featuring a revival of of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco's Cello Concerto and virtuoso arrangements for cello and piano BBC Music magazine wrote "*his is a cast iron technique of verve and refinement put entirely at the service of the music.. The artistry on display here is breathtaking*." His most recent recording, *Exiles in Paradise*, for Naxos explores the rich legacy of the émigré composers who gathered in Hollywood in the mid-20th century.

Mr. Smith's North American engagements have included performances at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and recital and concerto engagements throughout the country, while his broadcast performances include CBS's *Sunday Morning* and regular appearances on NPR's *Performance Today* and *Symphonycast*. Mr. Smith has appeared regularly as a soloist with the Houston Symphony since joining the orchestra as principal cellist in 2005. Prior to this, he was the first musician chosen by Lorin Maazel to join the New York Philharmonic and the principal cellist of the San Diego and Fort Worth Symphony Orchestras. His live concert performances on youtube have been viewed nearly a million times, including over two hundred and fifty thousand views of a live encore of Paganini's 24th Caprice. Devoted to expanding the cello repertoire, Mr. Smith performs a wide variety of violin, piano and vocal transcriptions and gave the North American premiers of rediscovered cello works of Jean Sibelius and Alexander Zemlinsky and the world premiere of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's 1951 Sonata for violin and cello. Mr. Smith also recently gave the first professional performance, recorded live for release on Naxos, of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's cello concerto since its 1935 premiere with Arturo Toscanini and Gregor Piatigorsky.

An active chamber musician, Smith has collaborated with violinist Gil Shaham on numerous occasions including Carnegie Hall's *Gil Shaham and Friends* series. He has also collaborated with cellists Yo-Yo Ma and Lynn Harrell, pianists Emanuel Ax, Jeffrey Kahane, Jonathan Biss and Kirill Gerstein, violinists James Ehnes, Cho-Liang Lin and Sarah Chang, soprano Dawn Upshaw, and members of the Beaux Arts Trio and the Guarneri, Emerson, Juilliard, Cleveland, and Berg quartets. He has performed with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Marlboro Music Festival, the Aspen Music Festival, the Sarasota Music Festival, the Seattle Chamber Music Society, the Mainly Mozart Festival, the Brevard Music Festival and the Texas Music Festival and is an artistic director of the Restoration Chamber Music series in Galveston. Mr. Smith is

currently an Associate Professor at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University and a faculty member of the Aspen and Sarasota Music Festivals.

The son of a mathematician and a pianist, Brinton Averil Smith was admitted to Arizona State University at age 10, where he took courses in mathematics and German and, at age 17, completed a B.A. in mathematics. He then became a student of Eleonore Schoenfeld at the University of Southern California, where he was also a teaching assistant in the mathematics department, and completed work for an M.A. in mathematics at age 19. He subsequently studied with the renowned cellist Zara Nelsova at The Juilliard School. While there he was a prize winner in several consecutive Juilliard concerto competitions and the Leonard Rose International Cello Competition and received a Doctor of Musical Arts degree, writing on the playing of Emanuel Feuermann. Mr. Smith resides in Houston with his wife, the pianist Evelyn Chen, their daughter, Calista and two slightly evil but kind-hearted dogs.