

# *Cello and Piano*

**A Duo Recital by Joan Evans and Brian Chapman**



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Presented by POMEGB

## **Bairnsdale Uniting Church**

Cr Great Alpine Road & Lanes Rd, Lucknow

— 2:00 pm **SUNDAY MARCH 25<sup>TH</sup> 2018** —

**Beethoven:** *Sonata in G minor for Cello and Piano, Op.5 No.2*

**Shostakovich:** *Sonata for Cello and Piano in D minor, Op.40*

– Interval –

**Saint-Saëns:** *Allegro appassionato, Op.43;*  
*The Swan from Carnival of the Animals*

**Brahms:** *Sonata for Cello and Piano in E minor, Op.38*

## PROGRAM NOTES

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### **LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)**

#### **Sonata No.2 in G minor for Cello and Piano, Op.5 No.2**

*Adagio sostenuto ed espressivo – Allegro molto più tosto presto*

*Rondo (Allegro)*

Beethoven's five *Cello Sonatas* not only occupy an important place in the relatively small sonata repertoire of the cello; they also happen to exemplify perfectly the three commonly recognised subdivisions of the composer's output into 'early', 'middle' and 'late' periods. The two *Op.5 Sonatas* follow directly in the classical tradition inherited from Haydn and Mozart, while the great *Op.69 Sonata in A major* is in turn romantic and heroic, being constructed generously from a wealth of broad, flowing themes. The final two *Sonatas*, *Op.102* mark the beginning of Beethoven's withdrawal into a more personal and uncompromising style that reached its peak in the final *Piano Sonatas* and *String Quartets*.

The *Op.5 Sonatas*, composed in 1796 and published early the following year, are really piano sonatas with cello *obbligato*, very much following Mozart's similar treatment of the combination of violin and piano, although the present *G minor Sonata* is somewhat less dominated by the piano than its companion, the *Sonata in F major, Op.5 No.1*. Both works were dedicated to King Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia, at whose court they were often performed by Beethoven and Jean-Pierre Duport, the principal cellist in the King's orchestra.

The opening *Adagio*, in common with the opening *Adagio* of the *F major Sonata*, is in the style of an operatic recitative, full of suspenseful anticipation, and serves as an elongated and portentous introduction to the ensuing *Allegro molto*, a richly melodic movement in Sonata form with a particularly florid piano part that seems to foreshadow Mendelssohn.

The final *Allegro* is a generously extended *rondo* in G major that places the two instruments on a more equal footing. The mood is mainly sunny and exuberant in a lively 2/4 metre, with some darker intervening episodes in minor keys.

### **DMITRY SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975)**

#### **Sonata in D minor for Cello and Piano, Op.40**

*Allegro non troppo*

*Allegro*

*Largo*

*Allegro*

This work was written in 1934 at a time when the composer was temporarily estranged from his first wife owing to a transient affair with a young student. The piece was premiered in Moscow in December by its dedicatee, cellist Viktor Kubatsky, accompanied by the composer. Shostakovich, a fine pianist in his own right, left two recordings of this work to posterity with cellists Daniil Shafran and Mstislav Rostropovich.

The first movement opens with a freely flowing lyrical theme for the cellist which, after reaching a spirited climax, yields to a more romantically cast second subject announced first by the piano. After a repeat of the exposition, a *pizzicato* passage for the cello introduces a brief 'development' leading to a truncated 'recapitulation' focused on the second subject, followed by a slow *coda* recalling the first subject.

The second movement (*Allegro*) is a highly spirited *Scherzo*, featuring much *ostinato* writing and brilliantly contrasted instrumental colouration. The slow movement (*Largo*) is mainly a heartfelt song for the cello, the theme of which is briefly shared by the piano toward the end of the movement. The sad close of the *Largo* is immediately

swept away by the spritely main theme of the ensuing *finale*, first announced by the piano then followed by the cello. The mood is light and jocular for most of the movement, apart from a frenzied interlude dominated by the piano before the final reprise of the main theme. There is more than a hint of facetious mockery at the close, similar to the ending of the composer's *Piano Quintet*.

### **CAMILLE SAINT SAËNS (1835-1921)**

#### ***Allegro appassionato for Violoncello and Piano, Op.43***

The year 1872 yielded a rich expansion of the cello repertoire from the hand of Camille Saint-Saëns as he composed in quick succession his *Concerto No.1 in A minor for Cello and Orchestra, Op.33*, the *Sonata No.1 in C minor for Cello and Piano, Op.32* and the present *Allegro appassionato*, the latter being arranged for cello and orchestra three years later and published as *Op.43*. In both its guises, the *Allegro appassionato* has become a favourite concert piece the world over, its lively and impassioned themes – all cast in a *rondo* form with contrasting episodes – living up to the expectations raised by the work's title.

#### ***The Swan from Carnival of the Animals***

*Carnival of the Animals* was composed in 1886 as a 14-movement chamber work for 2 pianos, 2 violins, viola, cello, double bass, flute, clarinet, glockenspiel and xylophone. The complete work continues to be perennially popular with young and old audiences, while its beautiful depiction of a swan gliding serenely across a still lake in the 13<sup>th</sup> movement has long enjoyed a life of its own as a standalone piece for cello with single piano accompaniment.

### **JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)**

#### ***Sonata in E minor for Piano and Cello, Op.38***

*Allegro non troppo*

*Allegretto quasi Minuetto*

*Allegro*

The first two movements of the *E minor Cello Sonata* were composed at Münster am Stein in 1862, the *finale* at Lichtenthal in 1865. The work was published by Simrock in 1866 with a dedication to Dr Joseph Gänsbacher. The first public performance took place in Vienna as late as February 1874.

The first movement begins with the cello giving out the principal theme in a low register, moving to a higher register for the reply before the piano repeats the first part of the theme and leads the cello to a brief climax. The transition section, beginning with the theme given by the cello in C major, gradually becomes more impassioned and leads to a heroic statement of the second subject with the two instruments following each other in close canon. A gently caressing theme announced by the piano and answered by the cello brings the exposition to a quiet close. After the exposition is repeated, the development begins quietly but soon moves to an extended dramatic treatment of the first two subjects. A delicately scored variant of the caressing theme leads back to a straightforward recapitulation. The final *coda* is based on the principal theme and concludes softly with the cello again in its lowest register.

The *Allegretto* in A minor has the stately rhythm of a formal *Minuet* but has the playful melodic snap of a *Scherzo*. The contrasting *Trio* section is in F sharp minor and presents the two instruments in unison giving out a smoother melodic line.

The *finale* is cast as a three-part fugue (piano left hand, followed by the cello, then piano right hand) and is a good example of the composer's natural mastery of contrapuntal form. The writing is extremely strong and brings to a dramatically energetic conclusion a work that commenced in a mood of melancholy lyricism.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

New Zealand-born cellist **Joan Evans** studied initially with her cello-teaching mother, Dorothy Wallace, winning a Queen Elizabeth Arts Council bursary at the age of 16 to study at the Guildhall School of Music in London with the legendary William Pleeth. During her time there she also studied with the famous cellist Jacqueline Du Pré before winning the Toussaint Award for cellists at the conclusion of her course.

On her return home she was a finalist in the New Zealand Concerto Competitions and a member of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra for 2 years before coming to Australia to take up the position of Principal Cello in the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. During her Tasmania sojourn Joan was cellist in the Lyrian String Quartet and Viola da Gamba player in the Tasmanian Renaissance Consort. She performed in many chamber concerts and broadcasts as a member of these ensembles and was also active as a soloist in broadcasts for the ABC. During later visits to New Zealand, Joan recorded for Radio New Zealand with the late Maurice Till, performing sonatas by Beethoven, Brahms and Shostakovich.

Joan moved to Melbourne to take up the position of Associate Principal Cello in The Elizabethan Trust Orchestra (now Orchestra Victoria), joining the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in 1980 where she remained until her retirement in 2012. In addition to the extensive orchestral repertoire, she has maintained her active enjoyment of playing chamber music, appearing frequently in the MSO Chamber Music Series.

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English-born pianist **Brian Chapman** studied in Brisbane with Nora Baird from 1952, and in Melbourne from 1954 with Lindsay Biggins, J.A. Steele and Roy Shepherd. Early achievements included the performing diplomas AMusA (1958) and LMusA (1965), and Victorian State finalist in the ABC's Instrumental and Vocal Competition (now Young Performers' Award) in 1966 and 1968 (equal State winner). His television appearances have included nine episodes of Channel 10's "Showcase" during 1968-1970 and a 1978 guest appearance on National Public Television in North Carolina.

Brian has performed widely in Melbourne, interstate and overseas, including the United States, Mexico, Germany and China. He has made over 100 ABC studio recordings and broadcasts, including chamber music with Andrew Bain, Rhonda Bruce, the Ciompi Quartet of Duke University, Jeffrey Crellin, Joan Dargavel, Graeme Evans, Tania Ferris, Phillip Green, David Griffiths, Brian Hansford, Louisa Hunter-Bradley, John Kennedy, Janis Laurs, Frances Lehmann, Christopher Martin, Phillip Miechel, Max Neil, Merlyn Quaife, the Rowe Quartet, David Thomas, Trio Victoria, Henry Wenig, and Matthew Wilkie. He has released five audio CDs of music for piano solo, together with CDs of Schubert's *Winterreise* with soprano Louisa Hunter-Bradley and the Piano & Wind Quintets of Mozart and Beethoven (with Crellin/Griffiths/Evans/Wilkie). He has appeared in recital with international virtuosi Hermann Baumann (horn), Thomas Indermuhle (oboe) and Denis Wick (trombone), and has also organised major musical events including Monash University's 1983 Brahms Chamber Music Festival and 1997 Schubert/Brahms Festival.

Brian teaches piano privately and, having been honorary accompanist with the West Gippsland Chorale from 2001 to 2009, he is now honorary accompanist with the Latrobe Chorale. His musical activities have been complemented by an academic career as a physiologist and educational software developer, including appointments at Monash University's Department of Physiology (1973-1989), QED Research Unit (1994-1997) and Gippsland Medical School (2008-2014).

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