

DENISE TAN

CELLO SENIOR RECITAL

with Beatrice Lin, piano

BRITTEN

Sonata in C, Op. 65

SHOSTAKOVICH

Sonata in D minor, Op. 40



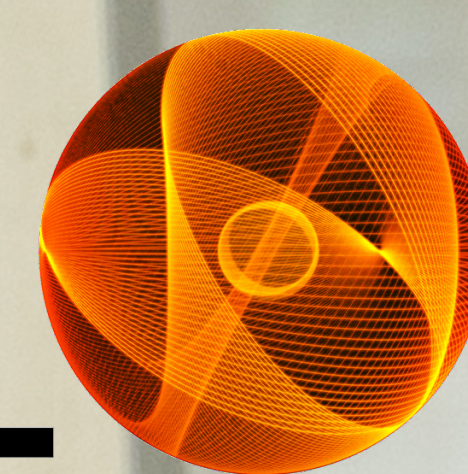
26 April 2023

2:40pm

YST Concert Hall

YST

Yong Siew Toh
Conservatory
of Music



PROGRAMME

DENISE TAN, cellist
BEATRICE LIN, pianist

BRITTEN

Sonata in C for Cello and Piano, Op. 65

- I. Dialogo
- II. Scherzo - pizzicato
- III. Elegia
- IV. Marcia
- V. Moto Perpetuo

INTERMISSION

SHOSTAKOVICH

Cello Sonata in D minor, Op. 40

- I. Allegro non troppo
- II. Allegro
- III. Largo
- IV. Allegro

Approximate concert duration: 60 mins

BIOGRAPHY

Denise is a 4th year Singaporean cellist studying at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, under the studio of Mr Leslie Tan.

She has been involved in the local scene since 2018, regularly performing both Western classical and Chinese traditional music. Orchestras and ensembles she has worked with include the Musicians' Initiative, Asian Cultural Symphony Orchestra, Metropolitan Festival Orchestra and Ding Yi Music Company.

Denise was also a member of the Singapore National Youth Chinese Orchestra from 2016 to 2019, holding the position of principal cellist since late 2018. In 2019, she was selected for the Overseas Music Immersion Programme, which allowed her to study at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music for a month under the tutelage of Professor Li Jiwu. She was consequently awarded the conservatory's Scholarship for International Students and performed as a guest player for the Chinese Traditional Orchestra of Shanghai Conservatory of Music during the 36th Shanghai Spring Festival under the invitation of Maestro Wu Qiang.

During her studies at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, Denise represented the conservatory in the Chofu International Music Festival 2022 in Tokyo, Japan, performing as part of the Festival Orchestra. This year, she also performed alongside ensemble-in-residence Red Dot Baroque in the school's side-by-side concert.

Denise enjoys exploring a variety of music genres, in particular maintaining an interest for folk music and tradition.

- I. Dialogo
- II. Scherzo - pizzicato
- III. Elegia
- IV. Marcia
- V. Moto Perpetuo

Britten's Sonata in C for Cello and Piano was written for the eminent cellist Rostropovich, following their encounter at the latter's UK premiere of Shostakovich's first cello concerto in 1960.

Rostropovich requested that Britten write a work for him, and stemming from a mutual admiration and friendship, the Sonata became the first of five cello works Britten dedicated to Rostropovich.

The Sonata, which is written in 5 movements, was premiered in 1961 at the Aldeburgh Festival in Suffolk, England, by Rostropovich and Britten himself.

As its title suggests, the first movement *Dialogo* depicts a dialogue between the cello and the piano. Rostropovich describes the movement as depicting “*a conversation not in words, but one that is finer and more intricate*”. The melodic intervals further capture an emotional complexity and unsettledness.

The solely pizzicato second movement *Scherzo - pizzicato* showcases the composer's creativity and exploration of cello technique. Writing to Rostropovich, Britten remarked, “*The pizzicato movement will amuse you,*” and requested for the chords to be plucked non-arpeggiated using multiple fingers at once, “*rather like guitar technique!*”.

The third movement *Elegia* similarly reflects its title with its sorrowful and pensive character. The movement builds in intensity to rousing quadruple-stops and a soulful largamente section, before returning to a more sombre character.

The following movement *Marcia* shows a contrasting strength and determination, with its display of military-like character and rhythmic motifs. At the same time, the movement possesses an eccentric quality with its incorporation of different timbres.

The final movement *Moto Perpetuo* provides an energetic close to the sonata, making use of a driving rhythmic motif throughout which is heard in various transformations of character and rhythmic groupings, provided with extra gusto through the employment of saltando.

I. Allegro non troppo

II. Allegro

III. Largo

IV. Allegro

The Cello Sonata in D minor was written in 1934, during an emotionally and politically tumultuous period of Shostakovich's life. It was composed for the cellist Viktor Kubatsky, with whom Shostakovich premiered the sonata with in Leningrad, Russia.

The Sonata is surprisingly conservative in terms of its musical composition, a notable contrast to the more experimental language of Shostakovich's earlier works. It employs classical forms, displaying memorable melodies and regular phrasing reminiscent of the simplicity and clarity of the Classical period. At the same time, elements of Shostakovich's more modern style can undoubtedly be heard.

The first movement *Allegro non troppo* is written in sonata form, largely homophonic in texture with the cello primarily playing a melodic role. The movement also features darker harmonies and disjunct melodic leaps, and notably ends with the first subject restated in a slow, restrained temperament in the recapitulation, as opposed to the flowing tempo of the exposition.

The second movement *Allegro* is a scherzo, with its employment of moto perpetuo exuding an unrelenting, rhythmic drive and a dance-like quality. This movement also utilizes much of the higher registers, with shimmering harmonic arpeggios in the cello and repeated notes in the piano providing a unique colour to the movement.

The third movement *Largo* provides the emotional centerpiece of the sonata. The lyrical line of the cello, supported by chromatic harmony in the piano, creates a deeply ruminative and troubled emotion that runs throughout the movement. The movement also draws on melodic and harmonic material reminiscent of the first movement.

The final movement *Allegro* is in rondo form, alternating between the fairly sparse main theme with its mysterious, quirky character, and busy running passages, to disjunct leaps. The movement comes to a rather abrupt end, bringing the sonata to a close.

Programme notes by Denise Tan.