

S.Prokofiev | M.Ponce | D.Popper

J O O H W A Y O U N G

Cello Senior Recital

Piano | Liu Jia



2nd Cello | Liu Lingyu

26 April 2023 | 1:30pm  
Conservatory Concert Hall  
Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music



## ***Program Notes***

### **Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953) Sonata for Cello and Piano in C major, Op. 119 (1949)**

The cello sonata in C Major was composed in 1949 by S. Prokofiev. The year before, Prokofiev was accused of formalism by the Zdanov Decree, much of his music was banned. However, he continued to compose, although it is uncertain whether his new works will be publicly performed. In 1949, Prokofiev attended a concert in which Mstislav Rostropovich performed Nikolai Miaskovsky's Cello Sonata No. 2 in A minor. Prokofiev was so impressed by Rostropovich's performance that he decided to write a cello sonata for him. The work is in three movements and lasts for about 25 minutes. The first movement, marked Andante Grave, begins with a full-voiced cello sound, followed by a short call-and-response folk melody between cello and piano. A heart-pounding interlude brings the main theme to a hilarious, flirtatious duet. The movement slows down while the cello plays beautiful harmonic cadence, and the second theme enters much more mechanically than the first. The second movement, a playful scherzo and trio, follows. A percussive pizzicato entry turns into a complacent romantic trio section. The final allegro ma non tanto remains timid, the melody and chord structure heavily motivated by Russian folk music. The movement lacks neither energy nor dynamism, but each climax, instead of developing in timbre and expressiveness, actually becomes simpler; sometimes diminishing to a one-note piano melody. The coda recounts the resounding opening notes of the cello in a grand duet, marking a turbulent and virtuosic conclusion.

### **Manuel Ponce (1882-1948) Estrellita (Little Star) for Cello and Piano (arr. Gaspar Cassado)**

Manuel M. Ponce (1882-1948) was a remarkable scholar and educator, and one of the most famous Mexican musicians of the 20th century. He made a great contribution as a composer connecting the concert hall to the world of Mexican folk song. He has written numerous works for piano, chamber ensemble, and orchestra, and is known for his impressive guitar works, brilliant folk song arrangements, and many original compositions. His best known is Estrellita (1912), for which Ponce also wrote lyrics. It appeals to all voice types, but is most commonly performed by lyric sopranos. Also it is often performed by violin. The cello and piano version was transcribed by the great cellist Gaspar Cassado.

### **David Popper (1843-1913) Suite for 2 Cellos Op. 16**

The suite was composed for 2 cellos by cellist David Popper in 1866. The suite consists of 5 movements, I. Andante grazioso, II. Gavotte, III. Scherzo, IV. Largo espressivo, V. Marcia. It is known by cellists as a virtuosic tour de force. Despite its musical charm, the technical demands of the piece have prevented its more frequent performance. The current setting for violoncello ensemble divides Popper's skillful cellistic writing into more manageable and even parts.