



# White Rock Concerts *Presents*

**Denise Djokic & David Jalbert**



*Friday, September 23, 2005*

## **Denise Djokic**

Canadian cellist Denise Djokic is establishing herself as one of the most exciting young talents of her generation. Her solo career has brought her centre stage with many of North America's foremost orchestras, and she appears frequently at major festivals as a recitalist and chamber musician. Denise's recent television appearances on the 2001 East Coast Music Awards and the 2002 Grammy® Awards have won her international recognition. Since winning first prize at the 1998 Irving M. Klein International String Competition in San Francisco, she has continued to garner many additional awards and prizes. In 2000, the Canada Council awarded her the use of the 1696 "Bonjour" Stradivari cello, on which she performs for this recording. A former student of Richard Aaron at the Cleveland Institute of Music's Young Artist Program, she is currently completing her studies at the New England Conservatory of Music with Laurence Lesser and Paul Katz.

## **David Jalbert**

Born in Rimouski, PQ, pianist David Jalbert is rising steadily as one of the most important Canadian pianists. David has performed as a soloist with many orchestras including the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, the Québec Symphony Orchestra and the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa. A seasoned competitor, he won First Prize in the 1997 OSM Competition, Second Prize in the 1999 CBC Competition and most recently the prestigious Sylva Gelber Award from the Canada Council for the Arts. David holds a Master's Degree in Performance from the University of Montreal, then completed an Artist Diploma at the Glenn Gould Professional School in Toronto. Currently he is living in New York City, NY where he attends the Juilliard School, being one of only two pianists to have been accepted into the Artist Diploma program.

## *Programme*

**Johannes Brahms: Sonata for Cello & Piano No. 1 in E minor,  
Op. 38**

- 1 Allegro non troppo
- 2 Allegretto quasi Menuetto
- 3 Allegro

**Ludwig van Beethoven: Sonata for cello & piano No. 3  
in A major, Op. 69**

- 1 Allegro ma non tanto
- 2 Scherzo, Allegro molto
- 3 Adagio cantabile - Allegro vivace

## *Intermission*

**Alexina Louie: Bringing the tiger down from the mountain II**

**Sergei Prokofev: Sonata for cello & piano in C major, Op. 119**

- 1 Andante Grave - Moderato Animato
- 2 Moderato - Andante Dolce
- 3 Allegro, Ma Non Troppo

## PROGRAMME NOTES

### **Brahms: Sonata for Cello & Piano No. 1 in E minor, Op. 38**

Brahms' First Cello Sonata is a product of the same period (1862-65) as the Piano Quintet, Op. 34 and is cut from much the same musical cloth — it is moody, powerful, and grandly structured. The opening movement (*Allegro non troppo*), with a long exposition repeat, takes up more than half the 25- to 30-minute playing time. Its long, elaborate opening theme establishes the nocturnal and introspective tone of the entire work. The second subject group expands the scope of the work by introducing a great, soaring theme in the minor between two calmer ones in the major. The development builds to a great climax in which it is the cello that accompanies the piano, reminding us that the work is titled *Sonate für Klavier und Violoncello* rather than the other way around. The coda somehow finds its way to a hard-won peace in the major. In this imposing movement, which obviates the need for a slow movement, might be found the origin of the great slow opening-movement structures of Mahler and Shostakovich. The second movement (*Allegretto quasi Menuetto*) is a wistful, melancholy minuet; its Trio is marked by the repeated halting and restarting of the music. The emotions that Brahms has held back up to now are unleashed in the closing *Allegro*, a powerful and passionate fugue that works its way into rondo form and closes, like the Quintet, with a breathless coda.

### **Beethoven: Sonata for cello & piano No. 3 in A major, Op. 69**

Completed in 1808, the same year as his Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, Beethoven's Cello Sonata No. 3 in A Major, Op. 69 bears the heading "Inter Lacrimas et Luctum," (*Amid Tears and Sorrow*). While this richly melodic work does not immediately strike the listener as doleful, there is some melancholy behind its reflective lyricism. True, the first movement, *Allegro ma non tanto*, is darkly shaded, but for the most part it is characterized by the pensive, cantilena melody that the cello introduces in the beginning. This theme veers into a more aggressive episode, then makes way for the second subject, which is also in two parts. Again, the first is highly lyrical while the second surges forward energetically. The development section breaks these

themes into their component parts and gives each a brief elaboration, alternating the contentious material with the more reflective passages, often in the lower registers of the instruments. The recapitulation allows all the basic material to reappear without incident.

The Scherzo, marked *Allegro molto*, finds the two instruments trading fragments of a syncopated melody, lurching from A minor to E minor and C major until tripping into a more songlike trio section featuring arresting dynamic contrasts and a bass drone. This whole structure is repeated, with the final appearance of the scherzo proper sneaking away on cello pizzicati.

The *Adagio cantabile* is technically only the introduction to the last movement, but it could almost stand alone on its 18 bars of gentle lyricism for the cello. An *Allegro vivace* breaks in; it's a sonata-form movement, with the first subject a happy whirl and the second a reminiscence of the cantabile material from the first movement. The development provides a virtuosic workout for both instruments, especially the piano, but the gentler coda ends the sonata on a note of noble jubilation.

### **Alexina Louie: Bringing the tiger down from the Mountain II**

One of Canada's most highly regarded and most often performed composers, Alexina Louie was born in Vancouver in 1949. Alexina Louie is the daughter of second-generation Canadians of Chinese descent. Her uniquely personal style, rooted in a blend of East and West, draws on a wide variety of influences—from her Chinese heritage to her theoretical, historical and performance studies. Her music has been widely commissioned and performed by Canada's leading orchestras, new music ensembles, chamber groups and soloists. Notable performances include the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra's presentation of *The Ringing Earth* for the gala opening of Expo 86; the Montreal Symphony Orchestra's performance of the same work in the United Nations General Assembly on United Nations Day (1989); the Toronto Symphony Orchestra's tours of Europe (1986) and the Pacific Rim (1990); and pianist Jon Kimura Parker's performance of *Scenes From a Jade Terrace*, on the programme at the gala opening of the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo (1991).

## **Sergei Prokofiev: Sonata for cello & piano in C major, Op. 119**

I. Andante Grave - Moderato Animato

II. Moderato - Andante Dolce

III. Allegro, Ma Non Troppo

It was a remarkable pair of Soviet musicians that gave the 1950 premiere of Sergey Prokofiev's Sonata for cello and piano in C major, Op. 119: pianist Sviatoslav Richter and cellist Mstislav Rostropovich. Prokofiev was among those composers officially condemned for "formalism" in 1948, and it is both fascinating and stirring to witness how successfully Prokofiev managed, in these last works, to create a music that seems perhaps utterly conservative but which still pushes new expressive buttons in quiet ways that the officials would surely never have been astute enough to hear. The composer of the Sonata for cello and piano might seem a tame composer compared to, say, the composer of 1914's Scythian Suite; but he is really just a composer who has learned subtler, more patient, and, ultimately, clearer ways to fully speak his mind.

The sonata is in three movements: Andante grave, Moderato, and Allegro ma non troppo. True Classical sonata-allegro form meets stunning, voluptuous melody in the opening movement. A low, unpretentious cello solo raises the curtain; out of the piano's occasional comments grows a little tune whose steady chordal accompaniment is soon taken over by the cello's striking pizzicato chords. Prokofiev once said that he was no good at writing melodies. Looking at the music of his youth we might be forced to agree; but the G major second theme of the Andante grave proves beyond any doubt what can be learned through a lifetime of work — it is rich, full, and exceedingly flexible.

The Moderato is a bouncing, energetic movement that dances its way towards a sublimely smooth central episode. In the finale, Prokofiev makes little effort to hide the fact that he was steeped in the music of Rachmaninov and Tchaikovsky during his youth. He might as a young man have revolted against that heritage, but he never escaped it, and in the Allegro ma non troppo he matches deeply lyrical "Russian" tunefulness with an easy gracefulness worthy of Haydn, and then adds the kind of impish rhythms and (late in the piece) virtuosic fire that will always say "Prokofiev" to us.

## A Message From the President

Welcome to the first concert of our 49<sup>th</sup> season of White Rock Concerts. I have been fortunate to have been involved in this magical series since 1993, but the series has, for every one of these 49 seasons, been under the stewardship of our Artistic Director George Zukerman, O.C., O.B.C.

And the series has grown from strength to strength over those years, growing in the number of concerts each season, the size of the audiences, and in its reputation for presenting quality artists to one of the most discerning audiences in the country.

For young artists and established artists alike, an engagement with us is welcomed – for the young as a mark of being on their way, and for the established as an opportunity to perform for an established series and a knowledgeable and appreciative audience.

And so we embark upon another sold-out season of beautiful, uplifting and thrilling music, made possible by the hard work of your volunteer Board, listed below.

Plans are already afoot for our gala 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary season next year. But for now, enjoy the music.

*Rick Gambrel, President, White Rock Concerts*

### **White Rock Concerts Board**

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*Friday, October 28, 2005*