

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH CONCERT SERIES SPRING · SUMMER 2012

# Concerts at The University

Tuesday 21 February 2012

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall

**Florian Kitt · cello**

**Aima Labra-Makk · piano**

**Programme of works by SCHUMANN,  
NIGEL OSBORNE and R. STRAUSS.**



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## Phantasiestücke Op.73

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

- (i) Zart und mit Ausdruck
- (ii) Lebhaft, leicht
- (iii) Rasch und mit Feuer

Schumann composed several sets of 'fantasy pieces', the earlier examples of which bear descriptive titles such as those in the eight *Phantasiestücke* for solo piano, Op.12, composed in 1837.

In later years, however, the genre carried fewer poetic or extramusical associations and became (like 'prelude' or 'intermezzo') a neutral label for any collection of unrelated instrumental miniatures. The *Phantasiestücke*, Op.88, for piano, violin and cello (published in 1850), even took the form of material recycled from an earlier project. The music had begun life in 1842 as a piano trio which Schumann subsequently abandoned, the composer later reworking the salvaged material and giving the new moments suggestive titles such as 'Homoreske' and 'Romanze' in order to accord with the expectations of the fantasy-piece genre.

The three *Phantasiestücke*, Op.73 – which do not carry poetic titles – were composed in two days (11-12 February 1849) as an antidote to the completion of the operatic project *Genoveva*, then occupying most of Schumann's attention. The pieces were originally scored for clarinet and piano, but the composer subsequently sanctioned performance by either violin or cello; he also rejected his original title *Soirèestücke*, which had suggested the intimate nature of the work. The three pieces are to some extent concerned with the working out of similar musical material, each taking as its starting point the fluid superimposition of duplet and triplet rhythmic patterns (later to become a hallmark of Brahms' style).

F.K.

## Roma Diary 2

Nigel Osborne (b.1948)

Roma Diary 2 was composed in 2011 for the Viennese cellist Florian Kitt. It is the second part of a musical diary dedicated to Florian, reflecting my many encounters with Roma music and Roma musicians.

N.O.

It is in 6 short movements:

1. Brioni Islands, Istria, July 2002/2007  
Medea, Drunken Night 1918  
Buki, Igor, Aleksandar  
Water flows from the spring; tears

2. Warsaw, February 1971  
Restaurant Cristal-Budapest  
ul. Marszalkowska 21/25  
csardas

3. Rakovica, mountains near Sarajevo, September 2010  
children of Los Rosales  
Roma musical  
celo

4. Gorcinovo, Blagaj, Mostar, July 2011  
Petrojvic Blasting Company  
the moon and the sun  
Mesecina, Zajdi, zajdi

5. Belgrade, summer 2007  
St Mark's Cathedral, bells and trumpets  
Restoran Aurora, apartment, street  
Roma Christening

6. Mitrovica, Kosova/o summer 2008  
Roma mahala, Ibar river  
Radio Romani  
India

## Cello Sonata in F major Op.6

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

- (i) Allegro con brio
- (ii) Andante ma non troppo
- (iii) Allegro vivo

Strauss burst on the scene with his early tone-poems, in particular *Don Juan* (1888), which proclaimed his allegiance to the revolutionary musical narrative techniques developed by Liszt and Wagner. But behind these achievements was an apprenticeship that gave him a solid grounding in the more conservative traditions of Schumann and Brahms, thanks to his horn-playing (and Wagner-hating) father, Franz, and Franz's colleagues at the Munich Court Orchestra.

The Cello Sonata is one of a group of chamber works – including a string quartet, a piano quartet and a violin sonata – he wrote in his teens and early twenties. He composed it between 1880 and 1883, for Hanus Wihan, principal cellist of the Munich Orchestra, for whom Dvorák was to write his Cello Concerto in 1895.



Strauss launches the sonata with characteristic youthful energy. Brahms' friend, the violinist Joseph Joachim, singled out for particular praise the arching lyrical theme for the cello shortly after the start.

The *andante* has been compared to one of Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words*. The finale, beginning in a hesitantly capricious mood that recalls Schumann, also owes a good deal to Mendelssohn, and also salutes Wagner's *Parsifal* briefly on the way. Strauss then is still absorbing influences. But the process would lead to his first fully mature masterpieces, the tone-poem *Don Juan*, begun just five years later in 1888.

Mike Wheeler

Austrian cellist **Florian Kitt** completed his studies with Gaspar Cassadó in Cologne and André Navarra in Detmold after graduating from the Vienna Musikakademie as a pupil of Frieda Litschauer. Following his debut at the Konzerthaus in Vienna 1964 he has appeared as soloist with many leading orchestras and conductors, given cello recitals and made numerous recordings. These engagements took him to most of the European countries, North- and South-America, the Near East and Australia.

Most successful were always his performances of more recent works – György Ligeti's cello-concerto at the Royal Festival Hall in London with the Philharmonia Orchestra under Diego Masson brought raving acclaim by press and the public, Luciano Berio's concerto "Ritorno degli Snovidenia" in Rome, Nigel Osborne's concertos, both dedicated to Florian Kitt were successful all over the world.

Born in the Philippines, **Aima Maria Labra-Makk** leads a solid career as a solo concert pianist, chamber musician and educator. Her performances and magnetic presence have earned her world-wide acclaim. European critics describe her playing as "peerless marked by high musical intelligence, colourful expression with physical robustness (to sound) with elegant ease of touch but never for the sake of display." Even the famous pianist and pedagogue Tatjana Nikolaeva highly praised the expressiveness and depth of her playing.

She performs in key cities and venues in Europe such as the Konzerthaus in Vienna, Haydnssaal in Eisenstadt, Mirabell Palace in Salzburg, Stefaniensaal in Graz and in Asia. She has also performed in international festivals such as the Vienna International Festival (Wiener Festwochen), 1st Women's Festival in Eisenstadt (Frauenfestival), Liszt-Beethoven Symphonies for Piano Series in Wiesbaden, Germany.

Since 2001, she has been going home regularly to the Philippines to perform and to hold masterclasses in different music colleges and institutions. Because of her unwavering dedication to the advancement of classical music in the Philippines, she was awarded 2006 by Governor Gwendolyn Garcia of Cebu the "Garbo sa Sugbu" (Pride of Cebu).