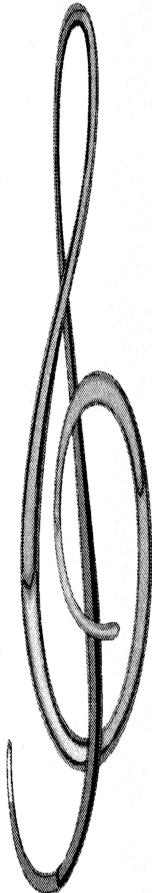


**Christopher's Classics - Series XXV 2020
presents**

Tennant-Austin Duo



*Performing: Beethoven, Psathas and
Chopin*

Presented by
Sunday Classics Inc

 Rāta Foundation

 Antonia
Strings

Elizabeth Ball Trust



**Thursday, August 27th, 2020, 7:30 PM
The Piano, 156 Armagh St, Christchurch**

The busiest lives deserve beautiful music.

Tenant-Austin Duo

Programme:

Beethoven - Cello Sonata No.3 in A major, Op. 69 (1808)

John Psathas - Halo (2014)

Interval: 15 minutes

Chopin - Cello Sonata in G minor, Op. 65 (1846).

Cellist, **James Tenant**, has enjoyed an esteemed and lively career as a concert cellist, chamber musician, teacher and arts instigator throughout many continents of the world, nevertheless, he calls New Zealand home.

James has performed numerous concertos with the Auckland Philharmonia, the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional de Colombia, Orquesta de Cali and the Dunedin Sinfonia among others. And he has shared the concert stage performing chamber music with leading musicians Piers Lane, Karin Adam, Dene Olding, Patricia Wright, Alexa Still, Michael Houstoun and the New Zealand String Quartet.

Past students include Santiago Canon Valencia (most recently, Silver medal winner of the Tchaikovsky International Cello Competition 2019), Edward King, Matthias Balzat and Sai Sai Ding.

At present James is currently Head of Cello Studies, Chamber Music and Orchestral Studies at the Conservatorium of Music of the University of Waikato.

James plays an 1898 Ernesto Degani.

"...[Katherine Austin] is mercurial, alert and a supreme colourist.. I'd put her among the top six pianists in the country and almost unrivalled as a chamber ensemble pianist."
Ian Dando, *The Listener*

Head of Piano Studies for the University of Waikato Conservatorium of Music,

Katherine Austin is one of New Zealand's leading pianists and performs regularly around New Zealand and overseas, touring frequently for Chamber Music New Zealand, and broadcasting regularly on Radio New Zealand Concert.

Katherine has performed Romantic piano concerto repertoire with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and the Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra and has been guest on a number of occasions as concerto soloist with the Auckland Chamber Orchestra and Opus Orchestra, specialising in the concertos of Mozart and Beethoven.

Programme Notes

BEETHOVEN - Sonata No. 3 in A major Op. 69 for Piano and Cello

- I. *Allegro ma non tanto*
- II. *Scherzo: Allegro molto*
- III. *Adagio cantabile - Allegro vivace*

Even though Beethoven's cello sonatas number only half as many as the violin sonatas, cellists are fortunate in that they were composed at widely spaced intervals. So, throughout the five sonatas, we get a clear view of Beethoven's compositional development throughout his so-called three periods. His early Op. 5 sonatas see piano dominated works as Beethoven comes to grips with how to write and balance a major work between the two instruments. With the recent development of a more powerful piano, this problem is more acute while the cello is playing slow long melodic lines in its bass register, which perhaps is the real reason Beethoven avoided writing a fully-fledged independent slow movement until his very last sonata. However, by 1807, he had enough confidence in the partnership to present us with a perfectly achieved sonata for two equal instruments. He completes his introduction of the cello as a melodic instrument of equal authority and beauty by featuring it taking the leading role in his Op. 70 'Ghost' piano trio.

Coming at the same time as the 5th symphony, this is Beethoven at the height of his powers. The opening theme, a wonderfully profound inspiration, commences with a quiet, gentle melody played by an unaccompanied cello taking advantage of its lowest strings. From this beginning the stage is set for this most soulful and dramatic instrument to show off the beauty of its four octave range in delightful interplay with the piano. The 2nd movement is structured as an extended scherzo, whereas the trio section is heard twice, like in the 4th symphony and the 2nd 'Razumovsky' quartet of the previous year. Also, the pianists, like in the Hammerklavier sonata, are asked to actually change fingers on the first tied notes of the movement, in an apparent attempt to recreate a 'Bebung' or vibrato effect that could be played on the old clavichord. At the finish of the scherzo, we are transported into a beautiful Adagio melody presented first in the piano with a lovely accompanying cello line before the cellist takes it over. Just when we are led to believe we are enjoying a full-fledged slow movement, we are thrown into an exhilarating finale of great excitement and virtuosity.

Duration: 25'

Notes by James Tennant.

PSATHAS - Halo for Cello and Piano

- I. *Red Halo*
- II. *Stacia*
- III. *Angelus*

Commissioned by Ian Graham and Agi Lehar-Graham, *Halo* was written in 2014 for the Cellist James Tennant and the Pianist Katherine Austin, and was premiered by them in February 2016 in the Auckland Town Hall. About the work, the composer intimated:

Red Halo - the evoking of a recently departed motherly presence through the hovering electronic shimmering around deeply expressive cellistic murmurings, reminiscent of a Duduk. Ah, that most deeply expressive of all instruments. Depth vs. Broadness. A Red Halo envelops all.

Stacia - an elegy. A deep voice sings as a river flowing upon a 20 beat Turkish rhythm. Where's the arrival? Where's the climax? She appears in the middle, distant, hidden in the pianist's right hand, but sadly we are left with only a dissipation.

Angelus - the frenetic working through of things between a mother and child. Representations of intense interaction, of conflict, of the inevitable arrival of a mad confusing climax. The moment of realisation: of utter loss, regret and the final certainty of all that was actually good, so good.....too late.

Duration: 20'

CHOPIN - Sonata in G minor Op. 65 for Cello and Piano

- I. *Allegro moderato*
- II. *Scherzo: Allegro con brio*
- III. *Largo*
- IV. *Finale: Allegro*

The public premiere of Chopin's Cello Sonata, his last major work, was presented as a headless torso! Opening the second half of a concert in February 1848, on the eve of revolution, the performance by cellist Auguste Franchomme and Chopin himself omitted the all-important first movement, which accounts for half of the work. Perhaps as Chopin suggested, there had been insufficient rehearsal time. Yet both artists had previously performed the entire sonata to a private audience. Was the reason Chopin's failing health? The writer and biographer Anatole Leikin has suggested another possible explanation.

Composition of the sonata between 1845-7 shadowed the gradual collapse of Chopin's relationship with the French writer George Sand. When in 1847 he attempted to intervene in a dispute between Sand and her daughter Solange, Sand effectively ended their relationship with a furious letter. What Leikin noticed is that the opening theme of the sonata bears a striking resemblance to the opening phrase of Schubert's song cycle Die Winterreise, which portrays the despair of a man forced to part from the woman he loves. Were the parallels between the movement and his private life simply too painful for Chopin to present in public? Certainly, the sonata seems to have been significant to him. On his deathbed he asked Franchomme to play it, but could not endure more than the first few bars.

Duration: 25'

Notes by Robert Johnson.

Christopher's Classics Next Concert:
Aroha Quartet with Robert Orr

performing **Britten, Beethoven, Taylor and Bliss**

Thursday 3rd September 2020, 7:30 PM

at **The Piano** 156 Armagh St.



Tickets: Door Sales: \$50 (students \$20) by Cash or EFTPOS only.
On-Line Sales: www.eventfinda.co.nz (all charges to purchaser)

For general concert information
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