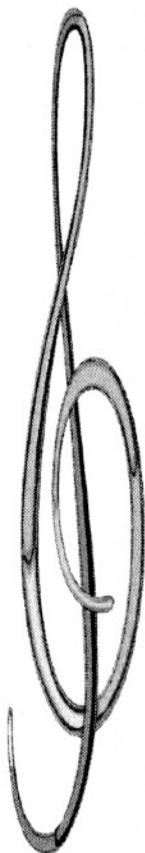


Christopher's Classics - Series XXVI 2021

presents

Serenity Thurlow and Diedre Irons



Performing: Hindemith, Brahms and
Shostakovich

Presented by
Sunday Classics Inc

 Rata
Foundation

 A Musical
Silence

Elizabeth Ball Trust

 THE PIANO
LIVE MUSIC RESTAURANT

Thursday, April 29th, 2021, 7:30 PM
The Piano, 156 Armagh St, Christchurch

The busiest lives deserve beautiful music.

Serenity Thurlow and Diedre Irons

Programme:

Paul Hindemith - *Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 11 No. 4*

Johannes Brahms - *Sonata for Viola and Piano in F minor, Op. 120 No. 1*

Interval: 15 minutes

Dimitri Shostakovich - *Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 147*

Paul Hindemith (1895 - 1963) Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 11 No. 4

I. *Fantasie*

II. *Thema mit Variationen*

III. *Finale (mit Variationen)*

Hindemith was a young man of 24 in 1919 when he made the move from violin to viola as a player. He immediately set about rectifying the lack of repertoire for his chosen instrument with this sonata for viola and piano, the first of many works he wrote featuring viola.

The sonata consists of three movements that he instructs are to be played without any pause between them. The opening *Fantasie* begins with a dreamy melody played first by the viola that wanders through several keys, developing a shimmering accompaniment evocative of Debussy who had died only one year previously. After building to a climax the movement eases into the second movement, a theme marked "like a folksong" with four variations. The finale immediately follows with three more variations ending in a wild, triumphant version of the main theme.

Duration: 17'

Johannes Brahms (1833 - 1897) Sonata for Viola and Piano in F minor, Op. 120 No. 1

- I. *Allegro appassionato*
- II. *Andante un poco Adagio*
- III. *Allegretto grazioso*
- IV. *Vivace*

By the end of the nineteenth century Brahms had thought he might retire from composing. This lasted until he heard the clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld and found his inspiration reviving. While the two Sonatas opus 120 were originally written for clarinet and piano, Brahms himself arranged both of them for viola and piano, taking great care to exploit the possibilities of the lower, darker register of the viola, endearing himself to future violists.

The first movement begins in a sombre mood with periods of passionate intensity that subside into melancholy. The second movement is a tender aria followed by a cheerful Viennese ländler as the third movement. The fourth movement is a boisterous rondo that ends on a jubilant note.

Duration: 40'

Dimitri Shostakovich (1906 - 1975) Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 147

- I. *Assai sostenuto – Moderato – Allegro assai agitato – Tempo I (Moderato) – Molto meno mosso*
- II. *Andante con moto – Allegro moderato – Tempo I*
- III. *Vivace*

The sonata for viola and piano opus 147 was the last piece Shostakovich wrote, finished only a few weeks before his death in 1975. He wrote it for Fyodor Druzhinin, the violist of the Beethoven quartet, to whom he suggested titles for each of the three movements. He described them as a novella, a scherzo and an Adagio 'in Memory of Beethoven' or 'in Memory of a Great Composer'.

The first movement Moderato opens with a pizzicato figure in the viola reminiscent of Alban Berg's violin concerto, followed by the piano with a uneasy melody based on a twelve tone row. The music is thoughtful with occasional outbursts of passion that subside into a quiet reiteration of the opening material. The second movement borrows heavily from his unfinished opera "The Gamblers": It is a lively scherzo filled with Shostakovich's trademark wit and sarcasm. The final movement is a requiem that references Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata, as well as Shostakovich's own work. The movement slowly builds to an anguished climax before receding into a sort of peace at the end.

Duration: 35'

Serenity Thurlow (Ngāi Tahu, Waitaha, Kāti Māmoe, Ngati Porou, Te Whānau a Apanui)

Serenity began violin at age five with the Suzuki Method and viola at fifteen. At the University of Canterbury she studied violin and viola with Jan Tawroscewicz and she was part of the inaugural Graduate Ensemble Programme at Victoria University, studying string quartet with the New Zealand String Quartet.

Serenity moved to Austria in 2006 to undertake further study at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. She completed her Masters there with Peter Langgartner and postgraduate studies with Thomas Riebl. She was a prizewinner in the Lionel Tertis viola competition in Salzburg. While in Austria she was an active chamber and orchestral musician, performing across Europe and the USA with orchestras such as the Salzburg Chamber Soloists, Camerata Salzburg, Deutsche Kammerakademie Neuss among numerous others.

In 2010 she returned to Christchurch to take up the position of Principal Violist in the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra. In 2012 she was Principal Viola of the Aldeburgh World Orchestra, part of the Britten-Pears Festival, which subsequently toured Europe. In 2016 she premiered Chris Cree Brown's Viola Concerto for the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra. She has been an active chamber musician in NZ, including touring NZ with the New Zealand String Quartet in 2021.

Serenity plays a Derazey viola, Malo bow and Leahy bow with the generous support of Christopher Marshall.

Diedre Irons

Diedre Irons is one of New Zealand's most distinguished performing musicians. Born in Winnipeg, Canada, she made her debut with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra at the age of 12 playing the Schumann Piano concerto. She graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia and was subsequently invited by her teacher, Rudolf Serkin, to join the faculty of that prestigious conservatory where she taught for the next seven years. During those years she toured Canada and the United States as a soloist and as a chamber music player.

Since moving to New Zealand in 1977 she has performed regularly with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, the Auckland Philharmonia and the Christchurch Symphony, toured many times under the auspices of Chamber Music New Zealand, and recorded extensively for Radio New Zealand. With the Christchurch Symphony and conductor Marc Taddei she has recorded the complete Beethoven Piano Concerti on the Trust label.

She has to date presented concerts in 25 countries, was awarded an MBE in 1989 and an ONZM in 2011 for services to music and in 2007 received the degree Doctor of Music (*honoris causa*) from Brandon University in Manitoba, Canada.

She taught at the University of Canterbury from 1992-2003 and at the New Zealand School of Music from 2003-2012.

Christopher's Classics Next Concert:



Te Koki Trio

performing **Bartok, Kodaly** and **Brahms**

Thursday 6th May 2021, 7:30 PM

at **The Piano** 156 Armagh St.

Tickets: Door Sales: \$45 (students **\$20**) by cash
\$50 (students **\$22**) by credit card/EFTPOS.
On-Line Sales: www.eventfinda.co.nz (all charges to purchaser)

For general concert information
email: treasurer.christophers.classics@gmail.com
or visit our website www.christophersclassics.nz

Acknowledgements:
Elizabeth Ball Trust, Rata Foundation, The Piano, Antonio Strings, Gloria Street,
Chamber Music New Zealand and private donors — thank you all