



Kettering Concerts

KetteringConcerts.org.au

Milestones

Our first concert for 2022, on March 20th, was the 100th since our first back in 2004. And what a start - Jonathan Békés (cello) and Karen Smithies (piano) with a full-sized audience for the first time since November 2019. It felt like we were finally putting COVID behind us.

Here is what Peter Donnelly had to say:

Written by J.S. Bach for viola da gamba and harpsichord in Leipzig, most likely around the late 1730s, the 3 sonatas BWV 1027-1029 were likely already being performed on cello and pianoforte in the composer's lifetime. Jonathan Békés (cello) and Karen Smithies (piano) played the last of these (No. 3 in G minor BWV 1029) with lively sensitivity and warmth to open the program.

Czech Bohuslav Martinu (1890-1959) was a most prolific composer whose output included 6 symphonies completed in America during World War II. The Variations on a Theme of Rossini for Cello and Piano, H 290 from 1942 uses the theme from Non più mesta in Act 2 of La Cenerentola, stated twice - at the beginning and end of the variations. Martinu gives a twist to the melody and proceeds with variations that are rhythmically and harmonically highly original, including some quirky configurations. These players had great fun with this short work, revelling in the energy and wit of the piece.

The main game here though was Shostakovich's magnificent Sonata for Cello and Piano in D minor, Op. 40. It was the composer's first major chamber music work and came at a time of some domestic turmoil for him in 1934. Both Békés and Smithies had the full measure of the sonata, performing with admirable concentration and technical refinement while conveying a range of moods from the dark and almost sinister to spirited abandon. The second subject of the first movement is surely one of Shostakovich's most ravishing melodies. Its arrival here was a heart stopping moment. The sardonic humour of the scherzo and the sad inwardness of the Largo were also fully conveyed.

There was an encore - 'The Swan' from Saint-Saëns 'Carnival of the Animals'.

Peter Donnelly

COVID Strikes

Our April concert was meant to be "piano 4 hands" played by Jennifer Marten-Smith and Karen Smithies, but at the last moment Karen was forced out by COVID infection. This was the first time this had happened in our series. Luke Frost agreed to step in and contribute to a programme of solos by Luke and Jennifer. It was an excellent programme and well received, but it was disappointing to miss on the duo-pianist programme Jennifer and Karen had planned.

Karen is now well and she and Jennifer would like to present the planned concert. We hope to be able to plan that soon.

MASKS?

Karen's infection underlines the risks of transmission of the virus at present. Tasmania's per capita infection rate is amongst the highest in the world.

So should we require audience members to wear masks? Some object to a strict rule, but we cannot ignore the concerns of our musicians about exposure, so we will continue to **RECOMMEND** our patrons wear a mask at our concerts.

Next Concert

On 8 May, we will welcome the Tasmanian String Quartet for the first time since 2020. Emma McGrath (violin), Jennifer Owen (violin), Douglas Coghill (viola) and Jonathan Békés (cello) will present Beethoven's String Quartet No. 16 in F major, Op. 135, his last composition, and Britten's String Quartet No. 2 in C major, Op. 36. This programme is proving popular with the likelihood the concert will sell out.

Spring Concerts

Aug 14: Violin and Piano Recital - Sue Collins (violin), Alexey Yemtsov (piano)

Sep 18: Piano & Viola Duo - Jennifer Marten-Smith (piano) and William Newbery (viola).

Oct 16: Piano Duo - Elenora Spina & Michele Benignetti (Italy).

Nov 20: Chrysantha String Quartet - Yue-hong Cha & Frances Davies (violins), Janet Rutherford (viola), Brett Rutherford (cello).