



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

Artist Diploma Recital
Zi-Yun Luo, Cello

March 29th, 2021 05:30PM Taipei, Taiwan

Program

Solo Cello Suite in D minor No.2, Op. 131c Max Reger (1873-1916)
Prelude, Largo
Gavotte, Allegretto
Largo
Gigue, Vivace

Solo Cello Suite No.1, Op.72 Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)
Canto primo (sostenuto e largamente)
Fuga, Andante moderato
Lamento, Lento rubato
Canto secondo (sostenuto)
Serenata, Allegretto pizzicato
Marcia, Alla marcia moderato
Canto terzo (sostenuto)
Bordone, Moderato quasi recitativo
Moto perpetuo e canto quarto, presto

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Artist Diploma in
Cello Performance

Zi-Yun Luo is a student of Dr. Jesús Castro-Balbi

Program Note

Solo Cello Suite in D minor No.2, Op. 131c

Max Reger (1873-1916)

Suite No 2 in D minor (dedicated, like the Cello Sonata No 2, to Hugo Becker) begins with one of Reger's finest cello inspirations, a *Präludium* of impassioned sorrow whose Bachian models are transcended in a remarkable display of empathy with the inmost soul of the instrument. Elegiac meditation is the tone throughout, even in the somewhat more virtuosic central section. Reger's command of a beautiful and flexible 'speaking' single line is nowhere better demonstrated. After its eloquent final climax the music subsides swiftly and sadly to a hushed *ppp* ending. In strong contrast, the succeeding movement is a cheerful *Gavotte* in F major, very formal in its layout and proportions. The central section makes both witty and poetic use of the alternation of arco and pizzicato playing.

The *Largo* third movement is a deeply expressive and rather melancholic soliloquy in B flat major, its chaste single line progressively reinforced by plangent double-stopping and more rapid scalic passages. Beginning fairly high in the instrument's register, it falls into a brown study in the lowest part of its compass in the middle of the movement, and it is in those regions, after a return to the opening theme, that it dies away. Like Bach's cello suites this one ends with a *Gigue*, a robust and bracing movement full of strong rhythm and yet imbued with the melancholy qualities of the D minor tonality that were more thoroughly explored in the *Präludium*. This does not sound like a communal dance, but like one danced alone, with no one to share the pleasure, to keep one's spirits up.

Solo Cello Suite No.1, Op.72

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

The Bach suites provided a compositional model for Benjamin Britten's three suites for unaccompanied cello, but the inspiration was the characterful, commanding playing of cellist Mstislav Rostropovich. In September 1960, Britten (1913-1976) attended the London premiere of Dmitri Shostakovich's recent Cello Concerto No. 1, in which Rostropovich - the work's dedicatee - was the soloist. The British composer and the Russian cellist struck up a rich and productive musical friendship, which was the direct source of five enduring works. Britten began work almost immediately on a Cello Sonata, which Rostropovich premiered the next summer at the Aldeburgh Festival with Britten playing the piano part. A Symphony for Cello and Orchestra followed, Rostropovich playing the premiere in Moscow in

1964, with Britten conducting the Moscow Philharmonic. That winter Britten began the first of his three Suites for unaccompanied cello; Rostropovich premiered it at the 1965 Aldeburgh Festival.

Rostropovich was a commanding Bach player, and Britten's Suite is full of the techniques and textures developed in the Bach suites. Like the Bach suites, Britten's First Cello Suite is in six basic movements, although more in the manner of character pieces than pure dances. Britten, however, uses an expansive, double-stopped Canto as a framing device. It opens the Suite and then returns after every two movements, a large-scale version of the Baroque ritornello.

The first movement proper is a fugue, in the sort of implied counterpoint that Bach employed more often in his solo violin works than in his cello suites. Athletic and mordantly witty, it fades away in harmonics like a musical Cheshire cat. The long-limbed, un-metered Lamento develops an expressive theme oriented toward E, and then turns itself upside down and heads toward E-flat; the ensuing tension between E and E-flat as a tonal center is resolved only in the final bar.

Each movement of the Suite leads directly into the next. The brief, transposed Canto Secondo introduces the Serenata, an entirely plucked movement with the staggering swagger of drunken flamenco. The Marcia also makes Spanish guitar references, to the tradition of pieces imitating holy day processions. Here the cello similarly suggests the approach of a fife and drum corps, passages in harmonics alternating with rhythmic rapping on open strings with the wood of the bow, getting louder as the parade nears, then fading away as it passes.

The chromatic tension and ambiguity of the Canto Terzo gives way to the Bordone (a term for drone strings) movement, anchored on a drone D throughout, with virtuosic figuration - including left-hand pizzicato - above and below the drone. The Moto Perpetuo buzzes with dizzying energy, the flight of a bumblebee on steroids. Britten gradually introduces phrases of the Canto, in its original shape and key, into this volatile mix, with a triple-forte, semi-tone stinger at the end.