

The vitality and verve of the opening pervade the entire first movement, whose unified thematic structure shows the influence of Beethoven and Schumann. There is extensive dialogue between the cello and piano, and an ingenious four-part fugue leads into the recapitulation. The *second movement*, with its pensive, dark-hued atmosphere and sensitive theme in “romanza” style, is clearly inspired by Mendelssohn, possibly by one of his “Songs without Words.” (Strauss also composed a Romance for Cello and Orchestra in the same year, 1883.) In the *Finale*, Strauss draws inspiration from Mendelssohn’s Scottish Symphony and Wagner’s Parsifal (which he had heard in Bayreuth). In addition, the movement reveals some unmistakably Straussian characteristics, including a cadence that foreshadows his own Elektra, written fifteen years later.

The F Major Cello Sonata was written for the Czech cellist Hanus Wihan, who gave the first performance in Nuremberg on the 8th of December, 1883. (Twelve years later, Wihan was the dedicatee of Dvořák’s Cello Concerto).

The manager and volunteer staff of the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre provide light refreshments (wine juice and savouries) and charge \$10 entry donation (\$5 concession/seniors) to cover costs and to raise funds for the Centre

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Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre
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Amateur Chamber Music Society
<http://www.acms-australia.org/>

Chamber Music Concert

Sunday 1 March 2015

5pm



Amateur Chamber Music Society
http://www.acms-australia.org/concerts/

— CONCERT —

5.00pm Sunday 1 March 2015 (first Sunday in March)
Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre, 16 Fitzroy St Kirribilli
www.KNCsydney.org tel: 9922 4428

— PROGRAM —

KUHLAU *Flute Quintet in A major (1822)*

flute Bridget Armstrong violin Stephen Malloch viola Danny Morris
viola Mikey Floyd violoncello Nicole McVicar

10'

RICHARD STRAUSS *Sonata for Cello and Piano*
in F major Op. 6

(1) *Allegro con brio* (2) *Andante ma non troppo*
(3) *Finale (Allegro vivo)*

violoncello Robyn Godfrey piano Christine Edwards

30'

— INTERVAL —

FAURE *Piano Quintet No. 1*

Second movement: Adagio

violin Vania Chan violin Sheila Fitzpatrick viola Danny Morris
violoncello Nicole McVicar piano Nick Stokes

10'

MILHAUD *Suite – Incidental Music to the play*

“Le Voyager Sans Baggage” –

The Traveller Without Luggage (1936)

(1) *Overture* (2) *Divertissement* (3) *Jeu* (4) *Introduction et Final*

violin Tracy Tsang clarinet Andrew Kennedy
piano Benjamin Chan

11'

— REFRESHMENTS —

concert organiser Tony Tenney

- Notes -

FRIEDRICH KUHLAU (1786-1832) *“The Beethoven of the flute”*

During his lifetime Kuhlau was known as a concert pianist and composer of operas based on Danish folk themes. He was a great admirer of Beethoven, knowing him personally, and he was well known in Denmark for introducing Beethoven's music to Copenhagen audiences.

Today, his most well-known and recorded works consist of his piano sonatinas and works for flute. There could have been a need for financial security to lead him to diversify: he composed more than 70 core works for flute. It is because of these flute works that he was nicknamed "the Beethoven of the flute".

He composed three quintets scored for flute, violin, two violas, and cello. Today we will be playing quintet No. 3 in A major, composed in 1822.

RICHARD STRAUSS (1864 – 1949) *Sonata for Cello and Piano*

Richard Strauss was born in 1864 into a musical household, and began studying the piano aged four. At the age of six he began composing, at eight he was learning violin and at eleven was studying theory of music, harmony and instrumentation. He was encouraged by his horn-playing father to study the works of the great masters such as Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Schumann and the influence of these composers can be heard in Strauss's Cello Sonata which he began to compose in 1881 at the age of 17.

He revised the work extensively during the winter of 1882–1883, preserving only the introductory *Allegro con brio*, in which the cello is treated in a heroic style anticipating his tone poem of 1888, “Don Juan”. When the sonata was first performed in Berlin in 1884, he was congratulated on the opening lyrical theme by the legendary violinist and composer Joseph Joachim.

DARIUS MILHAUD (1892 - 1974) *The Traveller Without Luggage – a soldier with a past but without his memory*

“Don’t be afraid of writing something people can remember and whistle – don’t ever feel discomforted by a melody”. So said Darius Milhaud to Burt Bacharach, his pupil along with blues pianist Dave Brubeck. These yet-to-be-famous popular musicians sought him out as their professor due to his reputation as an outstanding French composer who incorporated jazz and Latin music into his works. While Milhaud liked a jaunty tune and a shovelful of whimsy, not needing overt complexity of rhythm and melody, nor extravagant orchestras, he was a prolific radical modernist composer who tended to defy the listeners’ expectations with sudden polytonality. Often two instruments will play a parallel scale in different keys, or will suddenly move into a distantly-related mode just for three beats, resulting in a comical, offbeat, unsettled, or mystic atmosphere.

That brings us to *Le Voyageur Sans Baggage*, very often performed as “Suite for Violin, Clarinet and Piano” but actually a bracket of incidental music from the play about memory and identity by Jean Anouilh, author of *Antigone*. The play begins with Gaston, a soldier recently sent home after eighteen years in an asylum in France, being paraded to various families who claim he is their long lost son, brother or cousin. An unstoppably posh Duchess insists he must be of good breeding and bemoans the fact he doesn’t realise how amazing his story is. Meanwhile, the soldier is growing tired as he nears an interview with the four hundredth family that allegedly recognises him.

The levity of the first act is complemented by the music. In the first movement, “Overture”, we are prepared for the energetic verbal dance of the characters by a sunny, cheeky march that suggests Gaston driving optimistically through the back roads to find his hidden roots, and at times just embracing the sights and smells of the country. Immediately the composer’s first-hand knowledge of violin is on show, the writing technically demanding but insightful and manageable, giving an exciting ride for the audience. The piano uses a variety of self-knowing vamping and effervescent syncopation to give a view of this scene through the fourth wall.

Next, “Divertissement” is a much more intimate and sentimental piece, with only clarinet and violin - perhaps a view of a grandparent watching a child, the young Gaston, at play. There are bigger issues being explored in the drama, and the music is less irreverent. Suddenly the music dies, the violin rests, and the mood becomes distant and glassy. The violin reappears and coaxes back the happy memories. The flowing of the music, seldom resting, is like turning the pages of a book, unable to stop being engrossed in a tale. In the play, the soldier is getting small flashes and anecdotes fed to him, his story is being reconstructed slowly.

In “Jeu” (“Game”), the pianist spies on the relationship of the two other musicians. It could be an illustration of the interaction of two blissful teenage lovers, or children chasing each other in a game where the rules change and deeper emotions are uncovered. There is unbridled vigour, with very slightly lengthened notes followed by cascades of enthusiastic notes, tumbling and laughing - then the first lover speaks with poetic sweetness to woo the dear one. The response is suddenly in a new key – they aren’t from the same world, they have different expectations of the game. And rapidly it’s back to business as usual with the crazy romantic/childish rush of peppy staccato and brilliant scales.

The fourth part, “Introduction et Final”, begins with the only dark music of the work. The parts are heavy, insistent and overlapping, and the writing is five beats per bar, creating ambiguity and tension, reflecting the inner conflict of the protagonist. When the group quietens, it is perhaps more unsettling, we don’t know what decision the soldier has come to, to stay with this aristocratic family that hates him but wants him back nevertheless, or to adopt a simpler family where he not only has no memory, but also has no past?

The curtain draws with a merry dance, including some lines reminiscent of old Western movies. Here Milhaud’s habit of ignoring normal relationships of keys is on display, the tonality can either change in a flash, or be completely overlapped and sound wrong, but somehow right, exactly as the future direction is for Gaston.