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present

Jeffrey Solow, Cello
Elise Auerbach, Piano



Reynolds-Kirschbaum Recital Hall
January 24, 2010



Jeffrey Solow, Cello



Cellist Jeffrey Solow's impassioned and compelling cello playing has enthralled audiences throughout the United States and Canada, Europe, Latin America, and the Far East in performances as recitalist, soloist, and chamber musician. Born and raised in Los Angeles, he studied with the distinguished cellist Gabor Rejto and earned a degree in Philosophy magna cum laude from UCLA while studying with and then assisting the legendary Gregor Piatigorsky at USC.

Mr. Solow's concert appearances include performances of more than forty different works with orchestras including the Los Angeles Philharmonic (also at the Hollywood Bowl), Japan Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and the American Symphony (with whom he also recorded) and he has been guest artist at many national and international chamber music festivals. He has recorded for the Columbia, New World, ABC, Centaur, Delos, Kleos, Laurel, Everest and Telefunken labels and received two Grammy Award nominations.

Mr. Solow is active in other areas of music besides performing. *Strad*, *Strings*, and *American String Teacher* magazines have published his articles and reviews, he is editor of the *Newsletter of the Violoncello Society, Inc.* (NY), the nation's second oldest cello society, and also serves as VCS president. Recognized as an authority on healthy and efficient cello playing, Jeffrey Solow is professor of cello and chair of the Department of Instrumental Studies at Temple University in Philadelphia. He has twice chaired the American String Teachers Association's prestigious National Solo Competition, served on their Executive Board and is currently president of ASTA.

Elise Auerbach, Piano



Pianist Elise Auerbach has performed around the world and enjoys a diverse career as both a soloist and collaborative artist. Highlights include appearances at Carnegie Hall Weill Recital Hall, soloist with the Temple University and Delaware Symphonies, live broadcasts over Cincinnati Classical Radio WGUC and chamber music tours in Germany. She has participated and performed at many international festivals including the Opera Theater of Lucca, Italy, the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, Japan, the Banff Centre for the Arts and the Grandin Festival for Vocal Chamber Music. She frequently serves as Music Director for several local and regional Opera Companies, and has been pianist for the Choral Arts Society of Philadelphia and Artist-in-Residence at Cheney University. Currently, Ms. Auerbach is pianist for the Haddonfield Symphony, the Savoy Company, and Faculty Pianist for the Summer Conference for String Education and Chamber Music. A graduate of Temple University's Boyer College of Music and Dance, she earned a Master's Degree in Accompanying at the University of Cincinnati College – Conservatory of Music. She is a member of the vocal coaching faculty at Temple University in Philadelphia.

Program

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (German, 1770-1827)

Sonata No. 3 in A Major for Piano and Cello, Opus 69

Allegro, ma non tanto

Scherzo. Allegro molto

Adagio cantabile - Allegro vivace

AARON MINSKY (American)

Dead Cello – Four Grateful Dead songs arranged for solo cello, 2006

The Other One

Dark Star

Stella Blue

Truckin'

Intermission

ROBERT ALEXANDER SCHUMANN (German, 1810-1856)

Adagio and Allegro, Opus 70

FREDERIC FRANÇOIS CHOPIN (Polish, 1810-1849)

Cello Sonata in G minor, Opus 65

Allegro moderato

Scherzo

Largo

Finale. Allegro

Program Notes

Beethoven

Sonata for Piano and Cello in A major, opus 69

1996 marked the two-hundredth anniversary of Beethoven's invention of the sonata for cello and piano. This might seem to be an odd assertion considering that cello recitals often feature what would seem to be earlier examples, most notably by Boccherini and Vivaldi, but those are actually arrangements of sonatas for cello and basso continuo—solo cello with harpsichord and a second cello.

Beethoven's cello sonatas evolved from solo piano sonatas. Mozart seems to have initiated this trend with sonatas for the forte-piano and violin ad libitum, soon followed by his sonatas with violin obligé. In 1796, Beethoven met and was greatly impressed by the celebrated French cellists Jean-Pierre and Jean-Louis Duport and it is likely that the example of Mozart's violin obligé sonatas inspired Beethoven to come up with something similar that he could play with one or both them.

As his first violin sonata dates from 1797 and his last is from 1813, Beethoven's five cello sonatas (six, if one counts the cello version of his *Horn Sonata, op. 17*) completely bracket his ten violin sonatas. Thus, Beethoven's exploration of the concerted sonata began in 1796 with the *Cello Sonata in F, op. 5, No. 1* and reached its culmination in 1815 with the *Sonata in D major, op. 102, No. 2*, which he wrote for cellist Josef Linke and the Countess Marie von Erdödy—the dedicatee of the *Ghost Trio*. (The *op. 102/2* sonata is notable for being the first chamber work to be published in modern style with a cello part and a piano/cello score, i.e. with the other instrument's notes printed in a smaller typeface above the piano's notes.)

Composed in 1807-8, just before the *Pastoral Symphony, op. 68*, the *A Major Sonata* was dedicated to Beethoven's close friend, and amateur cellist, Baron Ignatz von Glichtenstein, although it is not clear if the Baron was a good enough cellist to perform it. (Beethoven's favorite performers of the sonata were cellist Nicolaus Anton Kraft and Beethoven's student, Baroness Dorothea von Ertmann.) Plagued, as usual, by numerous misprints and mistakes in editions of his works, Beethoven wrote to the sonata's publisher, Breitkopf & Härtel, in 1809: "Laugh at my anxiety as a composer. Just imagine, I discovered yesterday that when correcting mis-

takes in the violoncello sonata I, myself, had made fresh ones.... From this you will gather that I am really in such a state that all I can say is, 'Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.'"

The *A Major Sonata* has become the most popular of all of Beethoven's cello sonatas and with good reason. Not only is it the only cello sonata from his most ingratiating "middle period," but it is one of his most inspired chamber works.

– notes by Jeffrey Solow

Aaron Minsky

Dead Cello – Four Grateful Dead Tunes Arranged for Solo Cello

Though they were a rock band, the Grateful Dead (1965-95) included among its influences folk, bluegrass, blues, free-form jazz and modern classical music, giving it a quintessentially American sound. Coming to prominence in the psychedelic hippie scene of 1960s California, they became the "house band" of the counter-culture. Songwriter, artist, lead guitarist and vocalist of the group Jerry Garcia (1942-95) was viewed by many as its leader although he vehemently disavowed that role.

The beauty and inventiveness of their music inspired composer/cellist Aaron Minsky (a.k.a. Von Cello) to transform some classic *Dead* tunes into this suite for solo cello. Although the Baltimore Symphony premiered Lee Johnson's *Dead Symphony #6* in 2006, *Dead Cello* actually preceded it as the first classical transcription of the Dead ever made. Their publisher Alan Trist wrote to Minsky, "You have led the way."

The Other One (also known as *That's it for the Other One*) speaks of "Cowboy Neil at the wheel of a bus to never, never land." Neil Cassidy gained legendary status as the driver of Ken Kesey's psychedelically decorated bus that traveled across America in 1964 spreading the gospel of psychedelia. He served as the basis for the characters Dean Moriarty and Cody Pomeroy of some of Jack Kerouac's novels.

The lyrics of *Dark Star* (beginning "Dark star crashes, pouring its light into ashes") beckon one to travel "through the transitive nightfall of diamonds." This song became the signature jam piece for the band.

The soulful ballad *Stella Blue* begins gloomily, "When all the cards are down, there's nothing left to see, there's just the pain that's left and broken dreams," but ultimately concludes with an optimistic expression of com-

mitment to the power of music: “Dust off those rusty strings just one more time. Gonna make ‘em shine!”

The title of the upbeat *Truckin’* comes from the iconic 1968 cartoon by Philadelphia artist Robert Crumb, “keep on truckin’.” The lyrics offer the band’s misfortunes on the road (including a drug bust in New Orleans) as a metaphor for life: “what a long strange trip it’s been.” Here, too, the ultimate sentiment is affirmative: “It takes time, you pick a place to go, and just keep truckin’ on!” In 1997, *Truckin’* was declared a National Treasure by the Library of Congress.

Minsky notes that with its robust use of double stops and counterpoint in the tradition of Bach’s Cello Suites, *Dead Cello* straddles the line between the classical and rock genres “taking the listener on a fascinating journey using the traditional classical cello suite as a vehicle for the most esoteric offerings of the rock archives. So is it rock or is it classical? This suite so blurs that line as to make it non-existent.”

– notes by Jeffrey Solow

Chopin

Cello Sonata in G Minor, Opus 65

When one thinks of Frederic Chopin, his vast compositional output for his instrument, the piano, is what one immediately associates with this nineteenth century genius. While the piano was certainly his primary means of expression, he was also a great lover of chamber music and held a particular love for the cello. Many of Chopin’s compositions reflect his love of the cello and so it is not surprising that he composed a sonata for his “other love.”

Yet for Chopin to compose a suitable tribute for his two musical loves was not an easy task. His sketches show that the details of thematic development, transitions and ensemble usage gave him a great deal of trouble. Today, it is considered one of the pillars of his latter years, yet the reviews of his contemporaries were not so kind. Pianist Ignaz Moscheles, who later made a piano four hand arrangement of the *opus 65*, called the cello sonata “a tangled forest, through which now and then penetrates a gleam of sun.” Even the composer felt so diffident about the first movement that he omitted it in an early performance. In spite of these early questions about the compositional quality of this work, cellists embraced the work and it quickly became a staple of the duo repertoire. Today, the opening

Allegro Moderato sounds neither tangled nor particularly dense, much less incoherent, but rather lucid, evocative and amazingly melodic. The two instruments reach a near perfect balance, neither threatening to overwhelm the other. The two instruments are equal partners, as they surely were when Chopin performed the sonata with his friend Auguste Franchomme.

After the piano lays out the principal theme, the cello announces its entrance with a little three-note figure that will recur throughout the sonata in various guises, serving as a kind of leitmotif. In the *Allegro Moderato*, as in the mazurka-like *Scherzo*, the expansively lyrical *Largo*, and the vivacious *Finale*, Chopin combines discipline and spontaneity, infusing classical form with romantic freedom of expression. Such youthful energy and fertility of invention are all the more astonishing for a composer whose health was deteriorating rapidly. A friend who called on Chopin around this time found him hunched over in pain, “like a half-opened pen-knife.” As he and Franchomme began playing the *Op. 65 Sonata*, however, the composer’s “body gradually resumed its natural position, the spirit having mastered the flesh.”

– notes by Michael Fernandez

Birmingham Chamber Music Society

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(Yakov Kasman will join the quartet
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Parisii String Quartet

Thursday, April 15, 7:00 p.m.
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