



Department of Music
University of Alberta

Visiting Artist:

Mihai Tetel, cello

with

Helmut Brauss, piano

**Wednesday, October 14, 1992
8 pm**

**Convocation Hall, Arts Bldg.
University of Alberta**

Program



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PROGRAM NOTES

At his time Beethoven's Duos for Piano and Violoncello constituted an entirely new class of duo departing essentially from the concept of the baroque cello sonata with continuo. However, a direct link to the previous concept of the piano sonata accompanied by a melodic instrument can be seen in the first two sonatas op.5 in which the cello often doubles or compliments the piano in an ornamental way. Never the less, the tendency towards complete equality of the two instruments is clearly discernible and accomplished finally in his later *Sonata op.69 in A-major*.

According to his student Ferdinand Ries, Beethoven wrote the first two sonatas op.5 explicitly for Jean Pierre Duport, the famous "Paganini of the cello" then employed at the Court of Frederic William II of Prussia. Beethoven played these pieces with Duport in Berlin in 1796. Both works are in two movements, the first preceded in each case by a slow, meditative introduction. The extended last movements in Rondo form display humorous, sometimes even boisterous characteristics. These works are typical examples of Beethoven's early instrumental style containing already some of the liberating power of the important symphonies and sonatas created after the *Eroica* (1804).

The three extant sets of *Variations WoO 45, op.66 and WoO 46* are signposts on the way towards maturity in this genre. (The opus number 66 is not indicative of any chronological order!) They are generally of a lighter character, uncomplicated and playful - written quite according to the conventions of the time. However, a reviewer in the "Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung" was complaining about "abrupt shifts and harshness in modulations" and wrote: "The more I examine and listen to these transitions, they are and remain clumsy, and are and remain so all the more, the

PROGRAM NOTES Continued

more pretentiously and blatantly they are presented." In our days such judgements can only evoke a forgiving smile.

Beethoven's most characteristic writing for Piano and Violoncello can be found in the *Sonata op.69*, which can be considered an equal counterpart to the famous Kreutzer *Sonata for Piano and Violin op.47*. The introduction of the theme in the cello sets the lyrical tone of the whole first movement only occasionally punctuated by more virtuosic passages. The highly rhythmical Scherzo in A-B-A-B-A form with its insistent syncopations creates some focussed tension amicably relieved by the short Adagio Introduction to the exuberantly playful last movement.

Even today the abstract contrapuntal style found in the last two sonatas op. 102 might raise some eyebrows among music lovers. It is obvious that such type of musical utterance could hardly expect to find favour with Beethoven's contemporaries, who might have found these sonatas mannered or even bizarre. Not until the advent of the romantic era with its incessant surge for the borders of spiritual experiences could such music be considered acceptable and valuable. The historical distance of today, however, allows us to include these works among the most important and valuable contributions to this genre of chamber music. In 1860 Wilhelm von Lenz, in his "critical catalogue of all Beethoven's works" allotted the sonatas op.102 a well deserved place of honour: "No instrumental duet had gone so far in transmitting the musical idea in abstraction from the medium. The form is raised above itself - there is no question of a tournament between the partners, and the ensemble of two intelligent musicians becomes a triumph of poetic import.

Program:

Ludwig Van Beethoven

(1770-1827)

The complete works for Cello and Piano

Sonata op. 5, no. 2 in G minor (1796)

Adagio sostenuto e espressivo

Allegro molto più tosto presto

RONDO - Allegro

Sonata op. 102, no. 1 in C major (1815)

Andante - Allegro vivace

Adagio - Tempo d'Andante

Allegro vivace

Intermission

12 Variations, WoO 45 (1796)

on a theme from Handel's Oratorio "Judas Maccabäus"

Sonata op. 5, no. 1 in F major (1796)

Adagio sostenuto

Allegro

Allegro vivace

Mahai Tetel

Born in Bucharest in 1962, Mihai Tetel emigrated to Canada at the age of seventeen. In the intervening years, he has carved for himself an enviable niche as soloist with orchestra, in recital, and in chamber music at major North American music festivals.

Mihai has appeared as soloist with numerous orchestras and has collaborated in concerts with such distinguished conductors as Charles Dutoit, Andrew Davis, Uri Mayer, Mendi Rodan, Victor Feldbril and Boris Brott.

Mihai has been a featured artist in chamber music and recital at music festivals and as a recitalist he has toured Canada under the auspices of Jeunesses Musicales and Debut Atlantic. Abroad, he has concertized in Chile, Columbia, Hungary, Romania and the United States. In 1987, Mihai made his successful debut at Carnegie Recital Hall, under the distinguished patronage of Artists International.

Mihai's musical studies commenced in his native Romania and, after settling in Canada, he graduated in 1984 from the University of Toronto as an honours student of the celebrated virtuoso, Vladimir Orloff. With the assistance of the Canada Council, Mihai earned a master's degree from the Juilliard School in New York, and graduated in 1988 from the Professional Studies program of the Mannes School of Music.

Mihai has won several prestigious prizes and was a 1987 winner in the Artists International Competition, which awarded as its prize a New York Carnegie Hall debut. Most recently, Mihai has recorded, with cellist Ofra Harnoy, the complete sonatas for cello and continuo by Vivaldi for RCA.

Helmut Brauss

Helmut Brauss received his early musical training in Europe and has proven his extraordinary pianistic ability and stylistic versatility in many recitals, chamber music concerts, soloist with orchestras and radio broadcasts throughout Europe, Scandinavia, Iceland, Hong Kong, China, Japan, Korea, the United States and Canada.

Once called "a poet of the piano" by a leading critic in Munich, he has seven recordings with works by Mozart, Schumann, Brahms, Chopin, Pfitzner, Poulenc and Khatchaturian to his credit.

Helmut Brauss holds the position of Professor of Music at the University of Alberta, where in 1991, together with his colleague Stéphane Lemelin, he founded the annual Northern Alberta Summer Piano Master Class.