

# A cello celebration

**I**F Haydn freed the cello from its mundane ground bass duties then Beethoven surely provided wings for it to fly.

From Pablo Casals to Yo-Yo Ma, Paul Tortelier to Steven Isserlis, the stars of the instrument command as much respect as those divas, the violinists. But it was not always the case.

In Baroque and early Classical times - with the highly notable exception of Bach's six suites - the cellist was expected to be a second left hand for the harpsichordist.

Beethoven's role in promoting the instrument to the first grade was well illustrated in this concert which featured two of his sonatas.

And despite the hangover from APEC disruption - as well as a Musica Viva concert at Angel Place - a good-sized crowd turned out to hear the latest in Selby and Friends' excellent season.

Li-Wei is no stranger to Sydney audiences and is increasingly recognised as a major young talent overseas. He has performed in the Lincoln Center and at the BBC Proms.

The cathedral, although imposing, is also an intimate setting for recitals and this suited Selby's and Li-Wei's choice of program.

**CONCERT:** Kathryn Selby, piano, and Li-Wei, cello  
**WHERE:** St Andrew's Cathedral, city  
**WHEN:** Tuesday, September 11  
**REVIEWER:** Steve Moffatt

Despite its low opus number, Beethoven's F major Op 5 No 1 sonata shows that the composer put in the hard yards before publishing and the two movements, the first with its trademark slow and graceful opening, show the two instruments in equal and amiable conversation.

Li-Wei's sweet, expressive tone and smooth fingering particularly suits this early Romantic period.

The duo were equally at home in the full-blown Romantic landscape of Schumann whose beautiful *adagio* and *allegro* was originally written for the new and exciting valve horn. Up until then, horn players had to produce notes by lips, air pressure and diaphragm control, a process likened to blowing through a funnel into a garden hose.

The piece works beautifully with the soulful voice of the cello.

The highlight was the Beethoven Op 69 -



Li-Wei - expressive tone.

three glorious movements which Selby and Li-Wei negotiated splendidly.

The two other works on the program were virtuoso workouts - Paganini's formidable *Variations on one string on a theme from Moses by Rossini* - and an equally challenging piece, *Alone* by Italian cellist/composer Giovanni Sollima.

## listenup



WITHOUT doubt, *Liberated* is the new and pumping Velvet Revolver. With a revived big rock sound from the '80s, this album is a worthy sequel to *Appetite for Destruction*.

*Liberated* shows the band's growth and how it has become a team with three years of touring - what a great way to write the material for this release.

This album is mostly fast-pumping rock, so don't expect the melodic, catchy Gunner's style that made Slash famous. He is a member of Velvet and leaves his trademark in every underlying track, but more with licks and riffs than big solos.

Make no nostalgic assumptions; the sound of Velvet Revolver is hard rock plus more. Slash as well as the whole Velvet crew show *Appetite* was no illusion - nor is *Liberated*.

Stuart Niddrie

I WAS brought up with a piano in the house where dad, especially after a few sherbets on a Sunday arvo, would whizz off a mixed repertoire of Chabrier's *Espana*, a brace of Chopin's mazurkas and always, inevitably, Mozart's Piano Sonata No 11 in A major, aka *Rondo alla Turca*.

Understandably, I'm nostalgically fond of the *Rondo*, so much so that I have it as my mobile ringtone.

Thus, I was pleased to find it included in the ABC *Classic Piano CD* - a very democratic compilation of the top 10 plus selected highlights from the 100 favourite piano masterpieces voted by ABC FM listeners.

The CD includes piano pieces that one "cannot live without" as the jacket notes teasingly suggest, namely Beethoven's *Moonlight sonata* (No 1) and *Appassionata* (No 10), both interpreted here by Gerard Willems; Debussy's *Claire de Lune* played by Roger Woodward (No 3), and even deLulli's *Chopsticks* (No 7), which I can live without.

There are 19 tracks in all, most of them well-worn classics as you would expect. Just the thing to pop into your car CD player on your way to work, secure in the knowledge you're not out on a limb culturally.

Jack Rozycki

# Guide to a musical galaxy

IT'S always a pleasure to go to one of the boisterous Meet the Music concerts which are aimed primarily at school students.

This one was especially enjoyable as it featured the work that best sums up the idea behind the SSO's - and many other cultural bodies' - education programs.

The great 20th century English composer Benjamin Britten wrote *The Young Person's Guide To The Orchestra* in 1945 for two reasons - for a film which introduced the various elements of the orchestra to the younger viewer and to mark the 250th anniversary of the death of Henry Purcell.

I hadn't heard it for many years and have never seen it performed so I had forgotten what a wonderful and joyful work it is.

Narrated by composer and ABC broadcaster Andrew Ford - a welcome fixture at these concerts - it really is a

**CONCERT:** Meet The Music: Guide to the Orchestra with Sydney Symphony  
**WHERE:** Opera House  
**WHEN:** Wednesday, September 12, 2007  
**REVIEWER:** Steve Moffatt

dazzling introduction to the components that produce that magical sound.

As I sat listening to the various sections introduced playing variations on that ingenious Purcell theme - and then later in the piece Britten's equally clever fugue leading the listener back to the original theme - I found myself thinking about music at its most fundamental level.

Just who came up with the idea of attaching to a piece of wood catgut strings, and scraping over them horsehairs

stretched on to another piece of wood, and thinking that it would work?

But there wasn't much time for musing because next up was a "piano concerto" by one of our most talented and interesting composers, Elena Kats-Chernin. The piece, written for Stephanie McCallum who premiered it in 2000 and was here playing it for the first time with the SSO, is a set of 12 "displaced" dances which are not what they seem but sound as though they could be.

McCallum's dazzling performance of this demanding work set up things nicely for the second half, featuring Stravinsky's *Symphony in C*.

All in all, this concert was a guide to an orchestra of star turns.

■ Part of this concert will be performed today at 11am. Phone 9250 7777 for details.

EXHIBITION  
14 - 27  
September  
2007

Stephen Glassborow

Jarrah Johnson

Lisa Wisse

Trevor Victor Harvey Gallery

AWARD WINNING BRASSERIE - OPEN 7 DAYS

**\$10 STEAKS**  
Rump, scotch fillet, t-bone and marinated chicken skewers. Prime mouth watering grain-fed cuts served with full salad bar. Sunday to Thursday lunch and dinner.

Wallabies vs Wales  
Midnight Saturday Night - LIVE

**BROOKVALE HOTEL**

THE NORTHERN BEACHES MOST STYLISH MEETING PLACE  
511-513 Pittwater Road, Brookvale P 9905 0217 F 9905 7210  
www.brookvalehotel.com.au