

# Piano Duets by Debussy, Brahms and Rachmaninoff

Sunny Cheng, piano and Kris Zuelicke, piano

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**Wednesday Lunchtime Concerts** *providing lunchtime music in the heart of the city since 1974*  
St Andrew's on The Terrace WELLINGTON



## Welcome

It is wonderful that you have come. Thank you. We want your experience today to be the best that it can be and would appreciate you taking a moment to read the following before the concert commences.

**Keep safe** by locating the exit nearest to your seat. In the event of an earthquake, our recommendation is to **Drop, Cover and Hold**.

**Bon appetit!** You are welcome to have your lunch during the performance. Switching your cell phone to **silent** is important to the performers and other members of the audience. Your support by way of a **donation** and telling others about the concerts would be fantastic and very much appreciated. It does make a difference.

If you wish to photograph or video today's concert, please ask for permission from the performer(s) before the concert begins. This is important.

We invite you now to sit back, relax and **enjoy** the concert.

**Our Mission** is to create a lively, open Christian faith community, to act for a just and peaceful world, and to be catalysts for discovery, compassion and celebration in the capital.

These lunchtime concerts are **advertised** through Radio New Zealand Concert's Live Diary at around 8.10 am on the day of the concert and listed on St Andrew's website.

To be placed on the email **circulation list** for concert information, please email Marjan on [marjan@marjan.co.nz](mailto:marjan@marjan.co.nz). Also join our Facebook group Friends of St Andrew's on The Terrace Lunchtime Concerts,

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/315497448862287/>.

Check out the noticeboards in the foyer each time you come.

# Programme:

## **Petit Suite for piano four hands, L 65**

**Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918)**

En bateau: Andantino

Cortège: Moderato

Menuet: Moderato

Ballet: Allegro giusto

Debussy began composing the Petit Suite in 1886 and completed it in early 1889. The composer himself and publisher/pianist Jacques Durand gave the first performance of the work in February 1889 at a private concert in a Paris salon. Contemporary critics described much of Debussy's work from the late nineteenth century as 'too modernistic', and the Petit Suite seems to represent a response to this criticism. The lyrical melodies, captivating rhythms, and more subtle use of modernist compositional devices are all evidence that the suite was intended to be instantly appealing to a wider audience. Durand published the suite around the time of its first performance, leading to speculation that the publisher had specifically commissioned the work.

'En bateau' translates to 'In a Boat', and the lilting 6/8 rhythm and gentle broken chords of the first section beautifully convey a boat's rocking motion. 'Cortège' translates to 'procession', and its rhythmic figures and colourful harmonies are reminiscent of a festival or parade. The modal theme of 'Menuet' gives the movement an ancient quality, although this is frequently contrasted by incredibly varied harmony. The final movement 'Ballet' is an exciting finale to the suite. The first theme is in 2/4, which is contrasted by a lyrical waltz in the middle of the piece. After the first theme in 2/4 returns, the piece unexpectedly moves back into 3/8, and a coda that combines both themes concludes the suite.

## **Souvenir de la Russie for piano four hands, Anh IV/6**

**Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897)**

Der Zweig (The Branch)

In der Morgendämmerung wecke sie nicht (Don't Wake Her at Dawn)

Die Nachtigall (The Nightingale)

Ein Grosses Dorf liegt auf dem Weg (There's a Big Village by the Road)

Music publisher August Cranz first approached Brahms in 1850 to compose arrangements of popular songs and opera tunes. Published pseudonymously, as was the standard practice of the day, these musical 'Souvenirs of Russia' are ostensibly based on Russian and Bohemian folksongs that Brahms would have heard while playing the piano in taverns

in Hamburg as a young man. We chose four pieces from this collection of six duets, in part for their connection to the Russian-themed duets by Rachmaninoff that follow. The first, 'The Branch', is structured as a set of four variations. The second, 'Don't Wake Her at Dawn', loosely follows a theme and variations idea with intervening material comprised of a falling third motif. 'The Nightingale' is a gentle foray into the idea of a nightingale's song, utilising a turn figure combined with appoggiaturas as its central melodic ideas. It has a rousing section at the end that further capitalises on the yearning appoggiatura 'sigh figures. The final duet, 'There's a Big Village on the Road', is marked *pesante* and with a compound duple time signature evokes scenes of busy village life.

## Four selections from Six Duets, Op. 11 Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873 – 1943)

Barcarolle

Scherzo

Valse (Waltz)

Slava (Celebration)

The famous 'Barcarolle' movement suggests the elegant gliding of oars over the waters of Venetian canals, as is typical of this style, and provides a connection with the opening 'En Bateau' movement by Debussy. The 'Scherzo' movement features highly contrasting sections and rhythmic juxtapositions of 2 against 3 divisions of the beat. The 'Valse' sweeps along in typical 3/4 time as if providing theme music to a ball. 'Glory' is based on the same Old Russian liturgical chant employed near the end of the Coronation Scene in *Boris Godunov* by Mussorgsky (1831 – 1881).

*Programme notes provided by the performers.*

## Biography

**Sunny Cheng** is a Wellington-based pianist and private piano teacher. She was born in Beijing, China, and moved to New Zealand in 2007 with the dream of pursuing a career in music. She was already passionate about the piano when she arrived in New Zealand and was fortunate enough to study privately with Judith Clark. Sunny then studied piano performance at the New Zealand School of Music with Diedre Irons and Jian Liu. She was selected to play in many masterclasses with international and local concert musicians such as Michael Houstoun, Michael Endres, Peter Nagy, Read Gainsford, John Chen, Guillermo González, Bart Van Oort, The New Zealand String Quartet and The New Zealand Trio.

Since graduating, Sunny has remained an active performer. She has performed in many local concerts throughout the North Island, including a recital at Lewis Eddy in Auckland, a number of concerts organised by the Confucius Institute, and varies chamber music



performances at Expressions in Upper Hutt. Sunny co-founded Wellington Music Lessons in 2012 and has been a full-time piano teacher ever since.

A native of the United States, **Kris Zuelicke** holds undergraduate degrees in music, linguistics and German from Miami University and a Master's in Music Theory from Indiana University. While at Indiana University, she was an Associate Instructor for Music Theory and a member of the Contemporary Vocal Ensemble.

After moving to New Zealand from Germany in 2003, Kris taught and performed in many concerts on piano, cello and voice in Palmerston North and oversaw the Te Manawa Art Gallery Concert Series before relocating to Wellington in 2011. A recent graduate of the New Zealand School of Music with a Doctor of Musical Arts in Harpsichord Performance, she currently performs as a soloist, chamber musician and accompanist with groups such as the Queen's Closet and Stroma and teaches privately as a registered music teacher and at Queen Margaret College.



## Contact us

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## Coming Up

**30<sup>th</sup> October** –Inbal Megiddo (cello) and Jian Liu (piano) Cello Favorites: Cello Recital from the Golden Age

**6<sup>th</sup> November** - Talented Secondary School Students perform music for piano and strings by Mozart and Shostakovich

**13<sup>th</sup> November** - Ana Sinkovec (piano) and Sam Burstin (viola).  
Music for Viola and piano

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