

SERGEY ANTONOV, cello ILYA KAZANTSEV, piano

ARTISTIC VISION

In organizing my thoughts on how tonight's programme came to be, the simplest and most straightforward response is that I decided to go with my personal favourites.



In the first portion of the evening featuring Schumann, one of my preferred composers, the shorter pieces demonstrate the poignant and passionate bursts that punctuated his brilliant but tragic life. The three *Fantasy Pieces* that make up the Opus 73 are intended to be played as a whole. Poetic and idyllic, they were reportedly composed in 1849 in the midst of political turmoil that forced him to flee with his family to the countryside. The Five Pieces in Folk Style were originally composed for cello solo.

I chose Rachmaninov's *Cello Sonata in G minor* for the second portion of the programme partly because, being Russian originally, I like to showcase Russian composers. It also happens to be one of my all-time favourites.

It is beautiful, very rich and absolutely complete. In contrast to the exquisite, but much shorter pieces by Schumann, the Sonata is approximately 40 minutes and made for a perfect second half entirely in itself. Like most of the sonatas of the Romantic period, it has four movements. It is one of the most famous cello pieces and is very popular among cellists because it showcases the instrument so well.

Technically, it is not the most difficult; it is more difficult for the pianist and for this reason, often called the "Sonata in G minor for Cello and Piano". But emotionally and romantically, it is hard. It seems to change every time I play it. There doesn't seem to be a bottom line to it. I always find something new and I hope you enjoy it as much as I do. (*Sergey Antonov*)