

ANAM RECITAL: JACK OVERALL (CELLO) Of Poets and Philosophers

MONDAY 18 AUGUST 11AM

ROSINA AUDITORIUM, ABBOTSFORD CONVENT

Connor D'NETTO (b. 1994) Cello Sonata No. 1 *Traces* (2015) 14'
i. *fast*
ii. *slow + coda*

Ian MUNRO (b. 1963) *The Narrow Road to Oku* (2025)* 7'

Robert SCHUMANN (1810-1856) Cello Concerto in A Minor, op. 129 (1850) 26'
i. *Nicht zu schnell*
ii. *Langsam*
iii. *Sehr lebhaft*

Jack Overall (SA) cello

Ian Munro piano

Louisa Breen (ANAM Associate Faculty) piano

Approximate duration: 50 minutes

ABOUT JACK OVERALL

Jack Overall began his musical journey as a toddler banging on his parents' bass drum. Since then, he has enjoyed a breath of incredible musical experiences. Curiosity has always been at the core of Jack's musical interests. A passionate chamber musician, he has performed at the Coriole Music Festival, Chamber Music Adelaide's On The Terrace, and with such luminaries as Anna Goldsworthy, Chris Moore and Chistoffer Sundqvist. Jack is thrilled to be a third-year musician at ANAM with the incredible Howard Penny.

Jack is supported by ANAM Syndicate donors Andrew Baker, Elaine Canty AM and Roy Masters AM, Dewachen Fund, Max Garrard, Mary Oliver, and Anonymous.

Louisa Breen's Associate Faculty position is supported by Igor Zambelli.

** The 2025 ANAM Set commissions are supported by the Anthony and Sharon Lee Foundation.*

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PROGRAM NOTES

The genesis of this program came through conversations with Ian Munro on his new work, *The Narrow Road to Oku*. During rehearsals, we often talked about the story behind the piece and poetry's influence on music at large. In these discussions, the topic of Schumann came up, and I was amazed to discover a totally new dimension to his music that I had only briefly considered.

As a young boy, **Robert Schumann** was torn between passions for literature and music. His father was a prolific amateur author and filled young Robert's education with historical and contemporary writings from all over Europe. As classmate Emil Flechsig wrote: "we had unlimited opportunities to find out about literature: the whole Schumann house was crammed with the classics." This love of literature led Robert to found a literary society in 1825 with ten of his school friends, where he, as president, kept a reading log and collected quotes from books he read. By 1828, this quote book had reached 274 pages and 1,229 excerpts. Many of these quotes resurfaced as mottos in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* ('New Journal for Music'), which Schumann co-founded in 1834 to combat the perceived indifference of some older journals. While composition eventually took prominence, he was "constantly occupied with reading, carried books with him wherever he went, [and] read poetry on walks and whenever he was alone," as recalled by Franz Brendel.

Of the many authors Schumann was intimately familiar with, none were more influential than **Johann Paul Friedrich Richter**, known as Jean Paul. While little known today, Jean Paul was enormously popular during his lifetime. His writing is characterised by extreme sentimentality and emotional excess, wrapped in a wholly unique prose style. Schumann discovered Jean Paul's work around the age of 17 and was completely enamoured with his style. As Schumann wrote to the author: "your works have inspired my innermost being."

Jean Paul had a profound influence on Schumann's compositional style. The juxtaposition of grotesque humour with profound sentiment, his love of hidden meaning, and the inclusion of quotations from past works are all structural elements taken directly from Jean Paul. Schumann himself said that he had learned "more counterpoint from Jean Paul than from my music teacher." All these elements are clearly seen in Schumann's cello concerto, op. 129. It is a complex work, defined by striking contradictions. There are constant contrasts between introversion and extroversion, profundity and light-heartedness, and meandering harmonic passages, and it includes quotes from his *Fantasiestücke*, op. 73, among other works. At this time, Schumann was embarking on a comprehensive re-reading of his favourite books, with the goal of compiling an anthology of literary passages related to music. To be called *Dichtergarten* ('A Poet's Garden'), the unfinished manuscript of 750 pages stands as a final reminder of Schumann's lifelong devotion to the relationship between words and music.

Another story of a poet's life-long passion is that of **Matsuo Bashō** and his seminal work *The Narrow Road to Oku*. Bashō, born Matsuo Kinsaku, is known as the father of the haiku. Born into a minor samurai family, he spent his formative years in Kyoto studying Chinese poetry and Taoism with the distinguished poet Kigin, while writing *haikai no renga*, a form of linked verse. The first verse of a *renga* is called a *hokku*, consisting of three lines of five, seven, and five syllables. Bashō and his contemporaries began isolating the *hokku* to form short poems inspired by nature – what we now know as the *haiku*.

Following many years living and working in Edo (now Tokyo), the elder Bashō began taking months-long journeys to visit locations significant to earlier poets. From these trips, he created a new poetic form called *haibun*, combining passages of prose and haiku to convey a journey. The last of these journeys, in 1689, was a 2,400km trek with his disciple Sora, following the path of Saigyō, a poet from 300 years earlier. In the spirit of Bashō, **Ian Munro** has brought the first part of this tale to life with simple yet evocative textures, interspersed with passages from the book.

In keeping with the program's spirit, *Traces* by **Connor D'Netto** represents the passion of artistic ambition. The sonata, written for Samuel Mitchell and David Freisburg, is a brilliant exploration of thematic transformation, in which a few core ideas are given many meanings through varying contexts. It has a real driving momentum, contrasting with heartfelt lyrical passages. As the composer writes: "the parts collide, developing towards the heart of the work... before breaking apart and descending into traces of the music that was."

I would like to extend my deepest thanks to everyone at ANAM. To my teacher Howard, along with Sharon, Katie, Henry, and Marko; the incredible staff; the very wonderful community of audience members and donors; and to my amazing friends — you have truly been the heart and soul of what has been an unforgettable experience.

Words by Jack Overall