

ANAM RECITAL: LILI STEPHENS (VIOLIN)

Drama and Virtuosity: From Shakespeare to Storms

WEDNESDAY 22 OCTOBER 3.30PM

ROSINA AUDITORIUM, ABBOTSFORD CONVENT

Erich Wolfgang KORNGOLD (1897-1957) *Much Ado About Nothing* Suite, op. 11 14'
(1921)

- i. Maiden in the Bridal Chamber
- ii. Dogberry and Verges
- iii. Intermezzo. 'Garden Scene'
- iv. Masquerade. 'Hornpipe'

Eugène YSAÏE (1858-1931) Violin Sonata No. 4 in E Minor, op. 27 Fritz Kreisler 11'
(1923)

- i. Allemande. Lento maestoso
- ii. Sarabande. Quasi lento
- iii. Finale. Presto ma non troppo

Ludwig van BEETHOVEN (1770-1827) Violin Sonata No. 7 in C Minor, op. 30 no. 2 26'
(1801-02)

- i. Allegro con brio
- ii. Adagio cantabile
- iii. Scherzo. Allegro
- iv. Finale. Allegro – Presto

Lili Stephens (QLD) violin

Reuben Johnson (alum 2024) piano

Approximate duration: 55 minutes

ABOUT LILI STEPHENS

Beginning her musical journey at the age of four, Lili's love and enthusiasm for music has continued to flourish. In 2018, Lili was a recitalist in the National Youth Concerto Competition and in 2022, became a member of the Amogus Trio which won first prize in the Musica Viva Strike a Chord Prize.

Lili's passion for music is not limited to any one musical career path. Her aspiration is to have a multi-faceted and fulfilling career in all forms of performance within Australia as well as abroad. In her spare time, Lili enjoys painting, watching films, and cooking.

Lili is supported by ANAM Syndicate donors Olga Abrahams, Barry and Joan Miskin, Peter and Jane Phillips, Igor Zambelli OAM.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Erich Korngold's incidental music for Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* was composed in 1919 for a 1920 production of the play at Vienna's Schönbrunn Palace. It was originally scored for chamber orchestra, however, Korngold later arranged *Much Ado* for violin and piano—himself playing the piano part—after the run of performances were extended but no orchestra was available. The four movements are each extracts from scenes in the original incidental music. *The Maiden in the Bridal Chamber*, graceful in nature, depicts bride-to-be Hero on her wedding morning, blissfully unaware that her fiancé Claudio has been deceived into doubting her fidelity by the villainous Don John. *Dogberry and Verges (March of the Watch)* follows the pompous constable and his crony in a short yet extremely characterful movement. Though in the style of a march, it is completely unserious and mocking: fitting of Dogberry, one of Shakespeare's most memorable comic characters. The sudden rhythmic shifts that throw the march off kilter add an additional layer of humour. The epitome of grace and beauty is found in the third movement, *Scene in the Garden*. A romantic and flowing waltz, it depicts the love story of the sharp-witted Beatrice and bachelor Benedick. The *Masquerade – Hornpipe* is representative of a masked ball; a lively dance in rondo form, Korngold intersperses folk-like tunes to create a cheerful conclusion to the incidental music, even ending with an unexpected humorous tag.

Eugène Ysaÿe's Six Solo Violin Sonatas are each dedicated to a prominent violinist of his time—friends and artists he admired. The fourth sonata honours Fritz Kreisler, a virtuoso, composer, and pedagogue whose works remain central to the violin repertoire. Kreisler emphasized individuality and style in both his compositions and teaching, a value reflected in this sonata. In the Fourth Sonata, Ysaÿe returns to the structure of Bach's partitas. The first movement, an allemande, opens with a recurring theme that evolves harmonically and rhythmically, expanding the slurred figure after each initial triplet. The passage intensifies to a climactic high C before descending through increasingly complex rhythms—triplets, quintuplets, quadruplets, and finally a septuplet—leading to a general pause and the entrance of a dance-like theme. This theme reappears in the final movement, transformed in mood. The second movement, a sarabande, is rooted in triple time and built around a hidden ostinato: a descending A–G–F–E scale fragment recurring each bar. The finale, a perpetuum mobile, incorporates the allemande theme in its central section and otherwise resembles a gigue. Notably, this sonata was initially intended as the second in the set, suggesting Ysaÿe may have planned an alternation of sonatas and partitas, echoing Bach's structure. All three movements are in E minor, with the finale shifting to major as it draws to a close. Ysaÿe's violin sonatas are both a staple in violin repertoire and a favourite of mine, it truly does allow one to explore all avenues of the violin not only in a technical sense but also one's musical voice and how you choose to express yourself within the music.

Ludwig van Beethoven composed his C minor sonata for violin and piano in 1802 and dedicated it to Tsar Alexander I of Russia. This was a difficult period for Beethoven as he was becoming increasingly aware of his deafness, which had been progressing since his twenties. Processing this loss of a sense so necessary and dear for his life's work, he spiralled into a deep depression and yet, he still composed, crafting masterpieces including his Ninth Symphony and his late string quartets. This sonata stands at the threshold of a new musical era, yet its scale and emotional intensity firmly place it within the emerging Romantic ideal. The first movement is expansive and dramatic, structured by sonata form's tension between opposing keys and themes. It begins quietly but builds to a furious climax, driven by stark contrasts. The lyrical adagio in A-flat major offers some relief, though underlying chromaticism adds tension. The piano's surging scales erupt into bursts of C major—an important contrasting key from the first movement—which also anchors the playful, parodic scherzo and its contrapuntal trio. The finale is turbulent and tightly woven, starting with a foreboding, off-balance motif linked to the opening movement. Beethoven's developing style is evident in his ability to transform small musical ideas into far-reaching, cohesive expressions. This movement is a masterclass in concentrated musical and emotional development, with each phrase deepening the impact of what came before.

Words by Lili Stephens