

Compact Disc  
S22  
2018  
416

A Faculty Recital:

Sæunn Thorsteinsdottir, 'cello

and

Craig Sheppard, piano

7:30 PM  
April 16, 2018  
Meany Theater

UW MUSIC  
2017-18 SEASON

CD1-#17,995

PROGRAM

Sonata in F Major, Opus 5, #1 (1796).....25:08.....Ludwig van Beethoven  
1 Adagio sostenuto - Allegro (1770-1827)  
2 Rondo: Allegro vivace  
3 remarks, Sævin

Sonata in D Major, Opus 102, #2 (1815)  
4 Allegro con brio  
5 Adagio con molto sentimento d'affetto  
6 Allegro - Allegro fugato

CD2-#17,996

INTERMISSION

Sonata in G minor, Opus 19 (1901)..... Sergei Rachmaninoff  
1 Lento - Allegro moderato (1873-1943)  
2 Allegro scherzando  
3 Andante  
4 Allegro mosso  
5 encore: Rachmaninoff - Andante 5:26

Beethoven arrived in Vienna in 1792 and quickly became popular in musical circles for his quick wit and an ability to improvise at the piano that was the envy of many. By 1796, he had established himself sufficiently to have the confidence to write two cello sonatas and dedicate them to none other than Kaiser Wilhelm II of Prussia. We are hearing the first of these two sonatas this evening. The opening *Adagio* evinces searching and yearning, the ensuing *Allegro* a positive release from these doubts. Beethoven relished pianistic virtuosity as a young man, and he doesn't spare himself here. Both this, and the lively second movement, are the work of a young spirit not yet aware of his destiny.

The Sonata in D Major, Opus 102 #2, is of another world. Beethoven's deafness had manifested itself as early as 1797, perhaps following a bout with rheumatic fever. By 1815, when this sonata was written, he was nearly completely deaf, and about to embark on a series of compositions that would define his legacy for the ages. The style now is much denser, terser, the outbursts more exaggerated, the lyricism amplified. In the *Adagio*, one hears Beethoven's inner anguish, his acceptance of his fate, perhaps a presaging of his death. The *Allegro fugato* is a precursor to the much more extended fugue in the *Hammerklavier Sonata, Opus 106*, which followed a couple of years hence. Beethoven was determined in his later years to write contrapuntally in a manner that would be commensurate with that of his great predecessor, Johann Sebastian Bach. Here, we have one of his first attempts.

Rachmaninoff composed his Cello Sonata, Opus 19, on the heels of what was to become one of the most popular compositions of the twentieth century, his Second Piano Concerto, Opus 18. Both works followed a period of depression instigated in 1897 by the failure of his First Symphony. The story is well documented of his gradual recovery through the good graces of his cousins, the Satin's, who paid for numerous sessions of hypnosis with Dr. Nicolas Dahl in Moscow. This sonata, the work of a great virtuoso (and ultimately one of the greatest pianists of all time), overflows in exuberance, the momentary resolution of a troubled and indecisive past. Are we to believe that the justly famous slow movement, with its unparalleled lyricism, is a token of gratitude for this release from an inner purgatory? Rachmaninoff suffered from manic depression his entire life. How grateful we all are for these brighter moments.

Program Notes © Craig Sheppard, 2018.

"Riveting" (NYTimes) cellist, Sæunn Thorsteinsdóttir, has appeared as soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester, Toronto and Iceland Symphonies, among others, and her recital and chamber music performances have taken her across the US, Europe and Asia. Following the release of her debut recording of Britten's Suites for Solo Cello on Centaur Records, she has performed in some of the world's greatest halls including Carnegie Hall, Suntory Hall and Disney Hall. The press has described her as "charismatic" (NYTimes) and praised her performances for their "emotional intensity" (LATimes).

Highlights of the 2017-2018 season include the US premiere of Betsy Jolas' *Wanderlied* and the Hong Kong premiere of Sofia Gubaidulina's *Canticle of the Sun*, as well as recitals and chamber music appearances in New York City, San Francisco, Seattle, Glasgow, London and Reykjavík. In addition to collaborating with Daníel Bjarnason on his award-winning composition *Bow to String*, Sæunn enjoys working with composers of our time such as Páll Ragnar Pálsson, Halldór Smáráson, Þuríður Jónsdóttir and Melia Watras.

An avid chamber musician, she has collaborated in performance with Itzhak Perlman, Mitsuko Uchida, Richard Goode and members of the Emerson, Guarneri and Cavani Quartets and has participated in numerous chamber music festivals, including Kneisel Hall, Prussia Cove and Marlboro, with whom she has toured. Formerly Artist-in-Residence at Green Music Center's Weill Hall in Sonoma as well as cellist of the Manhattan Piano Trio, Sæunn is currently cellist of the Seattle-based chamber music group, Frequency, and cellist, founding member, and co-Artistic Director of Decoda, the Affiliate Ensemble of Carnegie Hall.

Sæunn has garnered numerous top prizes in international competitions, including the Naumburg Competition in New York and the Antonio Janigro Competition in Zagreb, Croatia. She received a Bachelor of Music from the Cleveland Institute of Music, a Master of Music from The Juilliard School and a Doctorate of Musical Arts from SUNY Stony Brook. Her principal teachers include Richard Aaron, Tanya L. Carey, Colin Carr and Joel Krosnick.

Sæunn is an alum of Ensemble ACJW (now known as Ensemble Connect)—a program of Carnegie Hall, The Juilliard School, and the Weill Music Institute in partnership with the New York City Department of Education—performing chamber music at Carnegie Hall and bringing classical music to students in the New York City Public Schools.

Born in Reykjavik, Iceland, Sæunn serves on the faculty of the University of Washington in Seattle, teaching cello and chamber music. For more information, please visit [www.saeunn.com](http://www.saeunn.com)

Craig Sheppard is Professor of Piano and Head of Keyboard at the School of Music. Following a distinguished twenty-year career in Europe, where he performed with many of the great orchestras and conductors of the day, as well as teaching at the Yehudi Menuhin School and the Guildhall School of Drama in London, Sheppard came to Seattle in 1993. Performances with the Seattle Symphony and the Seattle Chamber Music Society cemented his following in this city. Today, he maintains a full concert schedule internationally in addition to his private studio at the UW. Most recently, subsequent to a performance in Meany Theater in February of Bach's *The Art of Fugue*, he performed and gave masterclasses at the Jerusalem Music Center, the Hong Kong *Academy for the Arts*, Tainjin's Grand Theater, the China Conservatory in Beijing (where he is Visiting Professor), and Beijing's Forbidden City Concert Hall.

Sheppard has collaborated with many great artists in the past, including the legendary Victoria de los Angeles, José Carreras, Irina Arkhipova, and Ida Handel. Artists of the younger generation include James Ehnes, Yura Lee, Richard O'Neill, Johannes Moser and Sæunn Thorsteinsdóttir.

Sheppard's former students hold positions in universities and conservatories around the world. With colleague, Dr. Robin McCabe, Sheppard founded *The Seattle Piano Institute* in 2010, an intense boot camp held at the UW School of Music every July for aspiring young pianists from many countries, now entering its ninth highly successful year.