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1256

THE MANOEL THEATRE

presents

STEFAN POPOV

and

NATASHA CHIRCOP

in a

CELLO and PIANO RECITAL

of works by

J.S. Bach

P. Locatelli

C. Camilleri

A. Nieman

D. Shostakovich

M. de Falla

Monday, 5 March 1990

PROGRAMME

Prelude, sarabande, and bourees Johann Sebastian Bach
from suite no. 6 in D major (1685 - 1750)

The six suites for the cello are another instance of Bach taking hints from the past and basing structures of the utmost complexity upon them. Although by the end of the 17th century the technique of polyphonic playing on a stringed instrument had been fully developed, none before Bach had ever written unaccompanied music for a stringed instrument on any such scale as he composed two series of six pieces each. It is maintained that it is in these suites that the cello achieved its full emancipation as a solo instrument.

Sonata in D major for cello and piano Pietro Locatelli
(1695 - 1764)

Locatelli was a famed Italian pianist and composer who studied with Corelli and toured extensively all over Europe. He was a great innovative composer and his sonatas, written in 1733, are rather popular with cellists nowadays. They are all homotonal and constructed on the same plan; a slow, lyrical, opening movement, followed by a fast movement in contrapuntal style with the finale being a set of variations, often on a minuet theme.

Arabesque Charles Camilleri
(1931 -)

Charles Camilleri composed his six *Arabesques* between 1954 - 1957 at the same time as the well known Piano Sonatinas.

The *Arabesques* are based on ancient modes which Camilleri discovered when researching into the music of the Mediterranean.

For solo cello and in the form of a *suite* these works recall at once the historic past of the Maltese Islands in contemporary dress.

They are recorded on Compact Disc by Stefan Popov.

Soliloquy

Alfred Nieman
(1876 - 1953)

Coming from a musical family after studying with his father, and later Humperdinck, he worked as a teacher, composer, pianist and music writer. Influenced by Schumann and Brahms he later admitted to being drawn by folksongs and narrative elements. The bulk of his compositions are character-pieces, often programmatic and portraying nature.

Interval (20 minutes)

Sonata

Dimitri Shostakovich
(1906 - 1978)

allegro non troppo - allegro - largo - allegro

As a student at the Petrograd conservatory he achieved top results at the age of thirteen and won first prize in the international Chopin competition when he was 21. Many of his compositions have been explicitly programmatic, with ideological and contemporary themes. His career may be divided into three periods, youth, maturity and the final years. Written in the first period the Cello sonata reflects the composer's split focus: concern for tradition against challenge of it; an agonising moment of reflection where Shostakovich tried to discipline and correlate the opposing forces of tradition and innovation.

Spanish Suite

Manuel De Falla
(1876 - 1946)

El pane moruno - asturiana - jota - nana - chanson - polo

de Falla's modest and withdrawn nature contrasts strangely with the bold, passionate and emotional character of his music which represents the Spanish spirit at its most ebullient. In 1907 Falla arrived in Paris and amongst his first work there, were the *Siete Canciones Populares Espanolas*. Originally composed for the voice and piano an important feature of these songs is the deviation of the piano part from the vocal line thus stressing the natural harmonies derived from the folk tunes. These songs were first performed in 1915, in Madrid.



Born in Bulgaria **STEFAN POPOV** developed an interest in music from an early age. As a result of his exceptional progress, he entered a special music boarding school for very talented children. His debut at the age of 15 aroused great interest. One of his most distinguished supporters, the great Russian composer Dmitri Kabalevsky wrote, "I was elated to become acquainted with this gifted boy. He possesses all the qualities necessary to become a great cellist."

Soon after that, he won a government scholarship and entered the Moscow conservatoire.

His professors were the most distinguished Russian cellists, Knushevitsky and Rostropovich. Stefan Popov graduated with honours and the special gold medal.

His career subsequently developed very rapidly, both as a performer and as a teacher. He was invited to become a professor at Boston University and the New England conservatoire. A few years later, he was invited to come to England, from where his career is now based.

His repertoire includes all the major works for cello from the Baroque period to the present day. Stefan Popov has played with many leading orchestras and distinguished conductors. Many composers have dedicated their works to him and he has given their first performances.

He is now one of the most widely acclaimed teachers and combines his busy career as a performer with holding the post of professor at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and cellist-in-residence at the City University in London. In 1981, he was awarded an honorary degree at the Guildhall School of Music. He has given regular masterclasses and been a member of international juries.

The Manoel Theatre Management Committee wishes to thank the following concerns for their kind co-operation.

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