



Blackheath  
Chamber  
Music  
Festival



ELENA KATZ-CHERNIN &  
TAMARA-ANNA CISLOWSKA

Friday 19 April 2023, 4:00 pm  
Phillips Hall | Blackheath Blue Mountains NSW

Elena Katz-Chernin | piano  
Tamara-Anna Cislowska | piano

PROGRAM NOTES

All works by Elena Kats-Chernin

“...a true dream team...dazzling... Fasten your seatbelts and hold on.”  
– *Limelight* 2016

“I never write out our 4 hands versions...we keep changing it anyway and it is very specific to how we perform. And I just never had the time to write out anything...we like the same visual image to look at while we play.” – Elena Kats-Chernin

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*Dance of the Paper Umbrellas* ~~ “This piece was written for a Hush CD project. The idea for it started when I visited the leukaemia ward at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne and witnessed what wonderful work Dr Catherine Crock (the head of HUSH Music Foundation) and her team do. That experience was still with me when, a few days later, I sat at my piano. I wondered what kind of piece I could write that would be uplifting. I wanted to enter the world of magic and dreams. I imagined a cake adorned with multi-coloured umbrellas. A dance formed in my head, starting with a pattern in harp, marimba, plucked strings and flutes.”  
– Elena Kats Chernin

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*Sunshine Tango* ~~ A lively tango from the *Sunshine Journal*. Commissioned by Dalia Stanley for her husband's 69<sup>th</sup> birthday, *Sunshine Journal*, written for clarinet,

saxophone, cello double bass and piano in 2011, was originally a short piece called '*Birthday Rag for Tom*'. It was then expanded into a six movement work for Tom's 75th birthday. Each movement represents the joyous dance of life.

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***Human Waves 3, 4 and 8*** ~~ “Sydney Philharmonia’s Artistic Director, Brett Weymark, had a vision for a large work to be centred around the tapestry of our mixed community: an exploration and celebration of Australia’s diversity and how the fusion of cultures and traditions has enriched our society and taught us tolerance, thoughtfulness and gratefulness. It was Brett who came up with the title, which I loved from the beginning. It can mean so many things: a warm wave of welcome, the waves of the ocean – bringing so many migrants by boat, the waves people make when they change society.” – Elena Kats-Chernin.

It is a cantata in nine movements which pays homage to Australia’s rich migrant history: from escaping their home country with dreams of a new life, to seeing bathing beauties at Bondi Beach and tasting vegemite for the first time.

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***Butterflying*** ~~ Originally written as a song for children about flying in their dreams. A piece that never touches the ground. The original text by Christopher Latham refers to “a fanciful and exhilarating flight”. In a version for full orchestra this work was used in the 2003 Rugby World Cup opening ceremony.

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***Sandgate Sonata*** - movement I ~~ “Commissioned by the ‘Music By The Sea’ festival in Sandgate, I visited the area to gather inspiration to compose this work.”

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***Trade*** (from Ancient Letters) ~~ “The Ancient Letters are the first known documents of the Sogdian people who lived across what is today Uzbekistan, the place where I was born. The letters, dated from the 4th century, were discovered circa 16 centuries after being written, in an abandoned watchtower, far to the east of the main city, Samarkand, along the Silk Road to China. Trade is one of the main topics in the correspondence. The Sogdian travellers dealt in musk, silk and silver. *Musk Trade* is a movement in two distinct parts; the slow, aromatic *Musk* in a series of orientally dusted melodies, then the fast *Trade* of deal-makers, rush-hour and negotiations.” – Elena Kats-Chernin

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**Unsent Love Letters** ~~ a tribute to the eccentric genius Erik Satie.

Dozens of unsent love letters were found in his apartment in Paris, after his death. In 26 meditative and passionate piano miniatures Elena Kats-Chernin now sends these letters to the world.

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**Marcato** ~~ Based on a movement from *Five Chapters* for saxophone quartet and orchestra, *Marcato* encapsulates the chatter, gatherings and activity of a single evening, in a minimalist style.

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**Eliza's Aria** ~~ “I wrote the piece firstly as part of the ballet *Wild Swans* for the Australian Ballet. Originally it was for soprano and orchestra and had its premiere in 2003. The piece introduces Princess Eliza and expresses her pure soul, innocence and faith in the good of the world. The piece is light in texture and uses very simple harmonies. Since then I transcribed it for piano solo, as well as for string quartet, clarinet quartet, violin and piano, clarinet and piano, flute and piano, etc...

Due to the use of the original version in a TV advertisement in UK, it became well known there and has since been remixed by Mark Brown as well as other DJ's, as well as made into a pop song (called *The Journey Continues* sung by Sarah Cracknell).” – Elena Kats-Chernin

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**Re-Inventions** - movement 1 ~~ “When the virtuoso recorder player Genevieve Lacey asked me to write her a piece, we decided to meet for a ‘brainstorming’ session, and at one point she unintentionally played something reminiscent of one of the Bach's most famous two part inventions and suddenly this idea took hold – why not reflect on some of the Bach inventions?

I was brought up playing them in my early piano lessons and I found the idea intriguing – not only to re-orchestrate them, but also to give them a different structure and to take them in completely different directions from the originals. The task turned out to be quite daunting because Bach is Bach and is sacred ground for all composers. However, in the end I chose six inventions that I found the most inspiring to work with and that would be able to feature different recorders.

No. 1 is based on the invention No. 8, in F major. The challenge here was to write in a such a ‘bubbly’ major key, I usually prefer to write in darker, minor keys. This movement is quite insistent in nature and eventually transforms into a waltz.”

– Elena Kats-Chernin

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*Scherzino* ~~ This highly energised *Scherzino* jumps, hops and frolics all over the piano keys with quite a twinkle in its eye.