

Memorable recital full of power and skill

Canberra cellist David Pereira and his associate artist, Russian-born pianist Natalia Tkachenko now living in Canberra, presented a quite remarkable recital at Wesley Music Centre last Friday night.

It was not only for the virtuosity and expressive quality of the playing, but also for the sheer size and demands of the program, offering five large-scale and multi-movement works consisting of two concertos, a set of variations, and two substantial sonatas.

It was undoubtedly the largest and most demanding single program I have heard at a recital for many years, with a total time, including interval, of three hours and 15 minutes. Yet for its final work, the playing approach was as fresh as it had been at its start.

Tchaikovsky's *Variations on a Rococo Theme* was the opening work, and in effect is a full-scale concerto, full of the composer's typical invention and lyrical qualities. It received a performance that set the essentially bright mood to the rest of the program.

It was written for the cello and orchestra - with the piano playing an arrangement - and it was followed by an only slightly shorter three-movement work written for cello and piano,



Russian Cello Masterpieces.

David Pereira (cellist) and Natalia Tkachenko (pianist). Wesley Music Centre. June 27.

Sharagan II by Canberra composer Larry Sitsky. This made a pleasing interlude before the main and most demanding work, the *Sonata in G minor, Op 19*, by Rachmaninov. With four substantial movements, it was written soon after his most popular work, his *Second Piano Concerto*, and it shares that work's warmth of expression and powerful writing. Both players brought to it the necessary powerful realisation which was, despite its length, a constant enjoyment.

The final two works were Stravinsky's *Suite Italienne* and Prokofiev's *Symphonie Concertante*, his *Second Cello Concerto* and a notable work of its time. It drew a fully committed performance from the two artists, bringing this memorable recital to a powerful conclusion.