

# A concert to leave you singing

A program of romantic music is sure to enchant its audience, **Janet Wilson** writes

**T**he Wesley series starts from my own desire to play regularly in my home town," David Pereira says as he describes the concert. *Keyboard Legends for Cello*, which will be performed at Wesley Music Centre on December 12 and 13.

"In September last year Marcela [Fiorillo] and I played a cello recital at Wesley and I thought I'd like to do that again – this could be a series of recitals. I like the way the thing evolved and next year it will be a series of five recitals – enough for a year!" One of these recitals will be Fiorillo and Pereira playing music by Nin, Rachmaninov and others at Wesley in June.

But for this forthcoming December concert Fiorillo wasn't available as she has returned to Buenos Aires for an exciting re-presentation of her highly successful *Soul of Europe* concert.

Instead, Pereira is fortunate to have Larry Sitsky as his accompanist and they will be joined by violinist Frances Rouse and mezzo soprano, Christina Wilson in an eclectic program of works by Liszt, Paderewski, Mendelssohn, Bach/Busoni, Rubinstein and Clara Schumann. "I can choose who I play with," Pereira says. "Larry's wisdom and knowledge is so great."

Also on the program will be Wilson's performance of Sitsky's seven *Zen Songs* for cello and voice written in the last two years as settings of Chinese texts and a poem by Christina Rossetti. "The impetus of these songs is completely different from *The Jade Harp*," Sitsky says. That intriguing work was premiered earlier this

year by Angela Giblin and Geoffrey Lancaster. "These songs are gentler and lyrical. They were written originally for viola and voice to be performed at a house concert as a thank-you gift for John Curro, founding conductor of the Queensland Youth Orchestra, and his wife, Carmel."

Wilson hasn't sung these songs before or worked with Pereira but she says that she's very much looking forward to the concert. The warmth of the rapport that she always establishes with her audience should combine well with Pereira's beautiful interpretation of any music he chooses to play and with Sitsky's ebullient and amusing introductions to each work.

Frances Rouse, who teaches violin and plays with the Canberra Symphony Orchestra, will join Pereira and Sitsky to play the slow movement from Clara Schumann's *Piano Trio*. "It's by far the best thing I've ever experienced," she says. "It's wonderful to work with Larry and David. I'll treasure it."

Wesley Music Centre is the perfect setting for an intimate, informal presentation and Pereira loves to perform there.

"Working with Wesley is great," he says. "The level of expertise and cooperation of the staff and volunteers is exemplary. The audience can see the performer and the acoustic is wonderful – if an acoustic is too dry the sound of the strings doesn't pleasure the ear."

A vital part of Pereira's philosophy is a gentle concern for his audience.

"I noticed my relationship with listeners was growing. My desire is to play for a dedicated audience and I became more interested in



Cellist David Pereira takes delight in developing a rapport with his audience.

the detail of the audience's enjoyment. I wasn't really interested in bums on seats. I wanted people who really enjoyed my music." Sitsky explains that the focus of this concert is the presentation of

the complete works that Franz Liszt wrote for the piano/cello combination.

The recital will begin with Liszt's *Two Elegies*, which will be followed by his song, *In the Cloisters*. This

theme will continue with Paderewski's *Song No 2* and *On Wings of Song* by Felix Mendelssohn and then Sitsky's *Zen Songs*.

"The two Busoni transcriptions were my choice," Sitsky says. "Playing transcriptions was a 19th-century habit."

Pereira says, "The real toughie according to Larry will be the Busoni transcription of Bach's B minor toccata."

"There's a long section like an operatic aria punctuated by chords and followed by the fugue," Sitsky says. "The tonality is ambiguous. For its day it was a very daring piece."

After interval there will be more Liszt, including *Funeral Gondola*. "It's a beautiful piece," Sitsky says, "but it's spooky."

He relates the story of Liszt's premonition of the death of his son-in-law, Richard Wagner, and his vision of a black gondola carrying Wagner's body down the Grand Canal.

"And that's what happened!" Sitsky says. "To many people these later Liszt works, [*Forgotten Romance* and *Forgotten Waltz*] will be a revelation. It's soft, introverted music."

Rubinstein's *Three Pieces* for piano and cello will round out the recital. "David's fond of these," Sitsky says.

"I'd call it a romantic program," Pereira comments. "My mother says that people like something they can whistle or sing." Romantic, surprising, entertaining, amusing – this program is certain to encompass all this.

■ David Pereira Cello Series, 2008: *Keyboard Legends for Cello*. Wesley Music Centre, 7.30pm, Friday, December 12, at 7.30pm and Saturday, December 13, at 3.00pm. Bookings and pre-purchase: 6227 0949 or 0404 499 348. Email: onewithyoursound@hotmail.com.