

## MEDIA RELEASE

Big emotions and great masters

# Sitkovetsky Trio: a legend in the making

6-24 July 2017



Alexander Sitkovetsky (Image: Keith Saunders)



Bartholomew LaFollette (Image: Richard Lewisohn)



Wu Qian (Image: Keith Saunders)

*“Compelling, with a palpable sense of elation.”*

-Gramophone Magazine-

*“Hear these players while you can - they're well worth it.”*

-The Age-

The **Sitkovetsky Trio** are the young guns of classical music. Trained at the famous Menuhin School, they are all extraordinary, prize-winning soloists. Together, their music-making is nothing short of miraculous. Touring Australia from **6-24 July** for **Musica Viva**, they combine masterpieces of love and loss by **Rachmaninoff** and **Shostakovich** with the life-affirming magic of **Mendelssohn** and the evocative sounds of Perth composer, **Lachlan Skipworth**.

How do you rebel when your dad is a Russian rock star? You become a violin prodigy, of course. **Alexander ‘Sasha’ Sitkovetsky** hails from a line of music legends - his father a guitarist and singer with the 1980s Soviet band ‘Autograf’, his mother a pianist. Renowned conductor and violinist Dmitry Sitkovetsky is his uncle.

Yehudi Menuhin heard young Sasha play when he was seven years old and invited him to study at the Menuhin School in the UK. There, he met **pianist Wu Qian**. Originally from Shanghai, Qian (pronounced ‘Chen’) had caught the ear of a friend of Menuhin’s during a visit to China and was subsequently offered a full scholarship to the school.

With countless solo prizes and achievements to their names, the teenaged prodigies bonded over a shared love of chamber music. They founded the Sitkovetsky Trio in 2007 and have invited **cellist Bartholomew LaFollette** – a fellow Menuhin School graduate and rising star – to join them on their upcoming tour.

“As a pianist, I was very lonely doing only solo work,” Qian comments. “A piano trio gives the freedom for the three instruments both to shine and to merge.” Sasha agrees: “You cannot do this without the others, but at the same time you can express yourself individually as much as you want. It’s a wonderful combination.”

The critics agree. From the Wigmore Hall in London to the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Sitkovetsky Trio is at home on the world’s great stages and is widely considered one of the outstanding chamber ensembles of today. Audiences across Australia gave the trio a standing ovation on its last Musica Viva tour in 2014. It has won numerous awards, including first prize at the Kommerzbank Trio competition in Frankfurt and the prestigious NORDMETALL-Ensemble Prize at the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival.

On this visit, the group’s program progresses from darkness to light – the Russian flavours of Rachmaninoff’s *Trio élégiaque* no 1 and Shostakovich’s powerful second trio giving way to the relentless force of the ocean in Lachlan Skipworth’s work, then culminating in the showy, dazzling finale of Mendelssohn’s Trio no 1.

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“We’ve gone for two very big, audience-friendly Russian pieces,” says Sasha. “The Rachmaninoff is gorgeously melodic and the Shostakovich, although it’s so famous, is something we have not played as much before, so it’s very fresh in our ears.”

“The Mendelssohn is particularly close to us as it’s just over a year since we released a recording of both his trios,” says Qian. “It’s youthful, beautiful writing and though it’s challenging for the pianist, for the string players it’s all about feeling. You can just close your eyes and pour your heart into it.”

“We’re also very much looking forward to exploring the Skipworth piece,” continues Sasha. Commissioned for the 2015 Musica Viva Festival by Julian Burnside AO QC, the young composer’s Piano Trio was an instant hit. Drawing inspiration from Shakuhachi flute music and a traditional Japanese melody known as ‘Daha’, or ‘pounding wave’, it was praised in Limelight Magazine for evoking a “watery world of crashing waves and subtle swells”. Skipworth is composer-in-residence with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra and was recently awarded the coveted Paul Lowin prize for orchestral composition.



Composer Lachlan Skipworth (Image: Nik Babic)

Sasha can’t wait to be back in Australia: “I know everyone always says this,” he smiles, “but last time the whole tour was so well organised, with ample time to explore the country, and the venues were fantastic. We’re very much looking forward to our return.”

**The Sitkovetsky Trio will tour to Brisbane, Melbourne, Hobart, Perth, Adelaide, Sydney, Newcastle and Coffs Harbour. For bookings and further details, please visit <https://musicaviva.com.au/sitkovetsky>.**

Alexander Sitkovetsky will also mentor talented young students at a sold-out **masterclass in Sydney on 14 July 2017**. For details, please see <https://musicaviva.com.au/masterclass-sitkovetsky-trio/#0>.<sup>1</sup>

### TOUR DATES

Brisbane **06 Jul 2017 7:00 PM**<sup>2</sup>  
Melbourne **08 Jul 2017 7:00 PM**  
Hobart **08 Jul 2017 8:00 PM**<sup>3</sup>  
Perth **11 Jul 2017 7:30 PM**  
Adelaide **13 Jul 2017 7:30 PM**  
Sydney **15 Jul 2017 2:00 PM**  
Melbourne **18 Jul 2017 7:00 PM**  
Newcastle **20 Jul 2017 7:30 PM**  
Coffs Harbour **22 Jul 2017 8:00 PM**<sup>4</sup>  
Sydney **24 Jul 2017 7:00 PM**<sup>5</sup>

### PROGRAM

**RACHMANINOFF** *Trio élégiaque* no 1  
**SHOSTAKOVICH** Piano Trio no 2, op 67  
**SKIPWORTH** Piano Trio\*  
**MENDELSSOHN** Piano Trio no 1, op 49

### VENUES

Adelaide: **Adelaide Town Hall**  
Brisbane: **Queensland Conservatorium**  
Hobart: **Hobart Town Hall**  
Melbourne: **Melbourne Recital Centre**  
Newcastle: **Newcastle Conservatorium of Music**  
Coffs Harbour: **Coffs Harbour Education Campus**  
Perth: **Perth Concert Hall**  
Sydney: **City Recital Hall**

**ALEXANDER SITKOVETSKY** violin  
**BARTHOLOMEW LAFOLLETTE** cello  
**WU QIAN** piano

\*Commissioned for Musica Viva Australia by Julian Burnside AO QC

<sup>1</sup>Masterclass presented in partnership with City of Sydney as part of the Musica Viva at Green Square Library program.

<sup>2</sup>Brisbane concert presented in association with Queensland Music Festival.

<sup>3</sup>Hobart concert presented in association with Musica Viva Tasmania.

<sup>4</sup>Coffs Harbour concert presented in association with Coffs Harbour Music Society.

<sup>5</sup>Sydney Weekday Concert: Kenneth W. Tribe Tribute Concert.

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