

ROBERT SIROTA

COMPOSER

PROGRAM NOTES

SONATA #2 FOR CELLO AND PIANO (2018)

Program note by Robert Sirota:

I conceived of my **Sonata #2 for Cello and Piano (2018)** as a companion piece to my first cello sonata, composed thirty years earlier, and there are parallels between the two works:

Sonata # 1, completed in 1988, was commissioned by the (then young) gifted husband and wife duo of cellist Norman Fischer and pianist Jeanne Kierman, who have played it many times, have recorded it, and are still performing the work.

Sonata # 2, completed some 30 years later, was commissioned by the gifted young husband and wife duo of cellist Benjamin Larsen and pianist Hyungjin Choi, who present its first performance on March 17.

Though the second sonata is shorter, its architecture mirrors and refracts the earlier piece. Each begins with a rhythmically driving and relentless first movement. In the first sonata this is followed by a substantial scherzo movement; there is scherzo music in the second sonata, but it does not appear until the final movement. Here I have composed a second movement which, characteristic of my slow movements, is not very restful or serene, but becomes increasingly active. The third and final (and longest) movement begins with the scherzo, morphs into material from the first movement, and concludes with a sustained cello melody.