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Cello passion flowers early

Cellist Daniel Muller-Schott speaks to **Tania McCauley** before his tour

RENOWNED German cellist Daniel Muller-Schott speaks to Tania McCauley on the eve of his New Zealand tour, *Echoes of Home*, with the NZSO, in Napier on April 9.

Daniel Muller-Schott's first instrument was a recorder but he forgot all about it the first time he heard the cello. He was 5 when he began to study the instrument, and says he "truly fell in love" with its sound.

The Munich born and raised world-class cellist gained an insight into the life of a musician

through his mother, who had toured professionally, playing the harpsichord, and who taught piano. But as a youngster he thought about pursuing architecture or scriptwriting and producing movies. That all changed in 1992 when, aged 15, he came first in the prestigious Moscow International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians: "From then on

I was very definite about becoming a professional cellist."

Playing the master pieces composed for the cello has always been a joy, particularly sharing these "magical moments" with audiences. He's looking forward to performing for the first time in New Zealand.

He says part of the excitement of touring is getting to know the people and culture of a country, experiencing different foods, visiting museums and, hopefully, getting away from the big cities.

He loves to explore the wilderness of Bavaria.

"The mountains are just 40 minutes away from my home and I treasure spending some

time out in nature."

The Dvorak *Cello Concerto*, which he will perform on tour, is one of his favourite pieces.

"Each time I play it, I am moved thinking about Dvorak's love for Bohemia and the longing for his family at home.

Also I find it fascinating, that with this masterpiece, Dvorak started to move the solo cello finally to the big symphonic

scale. I believe, from that moment, many composers knew that the cello could stand against a large orchestra and they could write music in a different way."

Antonin Dvok composed the piece during a period when his sister-in-law Josefina Kaunitzov, whom he had long admired from afar, became ill. Soon after he returned to Bohemia in 1895 after three years in New York, Kaunitzov died. In 1896, he visited London to conduct the premiere of his *Cello Concerto*, a powerful study of longing and loss.

The rest of the concert comprises Russian Sergei Rachmaninov's final work, *Symphonic Dances*, and *Soliloquy for Strings*, composed in 1952 by New Zealander Larry Pruden.

Details

■ See Daniel Muller-Schott and the NZSO in *Echoes of Home*, conducted by Pietari Inkinen, at the Napier Municipal Theatre at 7.30pm, April 9. Tickets from Ticketek.



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