

Eastman School of Music

Chaojun Yang

Doctor of Musical Arts

Degree Recital I

Saturday, December 3rd

1:30PM

Kilbourn Hall

Concert Program

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Drei Intermezzi, Op 117

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

WTC V.I: No. 20, Prelude and Fugue in A minor, BWV 865

Pause for 3-4 minutes

Frédéric Chopin (1810 -1849)

24 Preludes, Op. 28

**This concert is being presented as partial fulfillment for
the requirements of the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree.**



About the Artist

Shanghai-born pianist Chaojun Yang made her international concert debut at just six years old—at the invitation of the International Exhibitions Bureau and with the mayor of Shanghai—Ms Yang visited Paris where she performed for 300 guests and governors from 88 countries. Ms Yang was then being spotlighted by the major Chinese press, including Xinhua News, SMG Shanghai Television, Shanghai Xinmin Evening News, Family Education Times, etc. as a child prodigy with a high

musical sensitivity. Ms Yang completed the combined B.A. B.M. five-year program at Bard College and Conservatory, majoring both in French Studies and Piano Performance. In 2019 Ms Yang was awarded a full merit-based scholarship to the Juilliard School of Music, New York City, where she got her Master of Music degree in 2021. Following a summer of chamber music at Taos Music Festival, she entered a doctoral program at the Eastman School of Music. Not long after arrival, Ms. Yang won the Eastman concerto competition in November 2021, and played the Chopin E minor concerto with the Eastman Philharmonia in Kodak Hall of Eastman Theater under the baton of Neil Varon.

With her consistently exciting performances, she has received commendations from the Shanghai Municipal Committee of Government and was awarded the Jack Kent Cooke Young Artist Award in May 2013. Ms Yang has also appeared on concert stages in Shanghai—her native city, as well as in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Australia, Britain, Canada, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, North Korea, the Philippines, Poland, and the USA. She has performed in some of the greatest venues throughout the world including the Sydney Opera House, Braunschweig Classix Festival in Germany, Pianofest in the Hamptons, Chopin House in Poland, Haikou Great Hall of the People, Shanghai Grand Theater, Shanghai Concert Hall, Shanghai Symphonic Hall, and Detroit Symphony Hall—where her performance of Beethoven’s “Waldstein” Sonata aired on classical radio station WRCJ. Her teachers in recent years include Douglas Humpherys (currently), Hung-Kuan Chen and Matti Raekellio. Her extensive repertoire runs from the Baroque era into the 21st century.

Her website (<https://www.chaojunyang.com/copy-of-media>) offers a selection of recent performances by Chaojun Yang on solo piano and chamber music. and with strings. Contact her through <https://www.chaojunyang.com/contact>

Brahms Three Intermezzi, Op.117

Among the late collections opp.116–19, Brahms's last works for piano, the Fantasien op.116, dubbed a 'multi-piece' by one critic, have the strongest claim to be considered as a coherent whole because of thematic, harmonic and stylistic connections. In a letter to his friend Rudolf von der Leyen, Brahms called the three Intermezzos op.117 'Wiegenlieder meiner Schmerzen' ('lullabies of my sorrow'). In the first piece the association with the lullaby is made explicit: the rhythm is a softly rocking 6/8 and Brahms prefaced the music with a pair of lines from a Scottish ballad, as translated by Herder, beginning 'Schlaf sanft mein Kind' ('Sleep softly, my child'). It has been suggested that the other two intermezzos in the set are also related to Scottish ballads.

Resource: Bozarth, George S., and Walter Frisch. "Brahms, Johannes." Grove Music Online. 2001; Accessed 2 Dec. 2022

Bach WTC Book I No.20: BWV 865

The Well-Tempered Clavier (WTC), BWV 846–893, consists of two sets of preludes and fugues in all 24 major and minor keys for keyboard by Johann Sebastian Bach. The title page of Book I of WTC (1722): "For the profit and use of the studious musical young, and also for the special diversion of those who are already skillful in this study, composed and made by Johanna Sebastian Bach, for the time being Capellmeister and Director of the Chamber-music of the Prince of Anhalt-Cothen." No.20 of Book I has one of the most difficult and complex Fugues.

Chopin 24 Preludes, Op.28

On the miniature extreme, no composer ever exceeded Chopin's mastery of the romantic fragment, the most suggestively romantic statement of all. Taking the first prelude in C major for example, it perfectly embodies the paradoxical, imagination-captivating nature of the genre, being at once fragmentary and whole, complete and yet not complete, sufficient yet insufficient. (Compare Oscar Wilde on the "perfect pleasure" of a cigarette: "it is exquisite, yet it leaves one unsatisfied."). The evocative genre Chopin thus created, is a prelude to everything and nothing (or, if one insists on being tiresomely literalistic, to the next prelude). It was widely imitated by later romantics and post-romantics.

While Chopin's prelude is "on purpose," a put-on thing from beginning to end, the part writing, however arbitrary the effect, is contrapuntally pristine, rendering the piece at once academically impeccable and poetically fractious. Those primarily committed to academic respectability must respect it, even as they wonder at the grotesquerie (and possibly try to explain it away). Those primarily committed to poetic fractiousness will wonder at the cool "aristocratic" control of the facture (the "making," the technical handling or management of materials) which with Chopin was such an indispensable point of honor. There is, in short, something in this piece to bewilder everyone, and something for everyone to admire. It was when both of these elements were present and impossible to disengage from one another that romantics were most apt to speak, as Schumann did, of genius.

From the wildest storms to the most delicate dream, and from the absurd grotesque (like prelude no.2) to the pastoral simplicity, Chopin managed to contain the limitless imagination into a minimal duration, greatly expanded the range of pianistic

expression, deepened the philosophy of musical poeties, and heightened the level of artistic aesthetics.

Resource: Taruskin, Richard. "Chapter 7 Self and Other." In Music in the Nineteenth Century, Oxford University Press. (New York, USA, n.d.). Retrieved 2 Dec. 2022