

CAO LAN

Viola Junior Recital

Pianist Liu Jia

Nov 26th 2020 | 4pm



YST
Yong Siew Toh
Conservatory
of Music

26 November | Thursday

Cao Lan

Viola Recital

Liu Jia, *piano*

PROGRAMME

ARNOLD BAX

Viola Sonata

I. Molto moderato – Allegro

II. Allegro energico, ma non troppo presto

III. Molto lento

About The Performer

Cao Lan is a third year viola student in Yong Siew Toh Conservatory studying in Prof. Zhang Manchin's studio. She started to learn the violin at the age of 6, later changed to study the viola in junior high school. Cao Lan participated in various music festivals, like Youth Music Culture Guangdong, National Youth Orchestra of China and so on. These experiences help her gained much useful experience and got in touch with wonderful musicians all over the world. Besides music, she loves reading and writing as well. She is curious about subjects like anthropology and philosophy. She is willing to understand different cultures and always use music to express her understanding of the world.

Programme Notes

ARNOLD BAX

Viola Sonata

I. Molto moderato – Allegro

II. Allegro energico, ma non troppo presto

III. Molto lento

Arnold Bax is an English composer, poet, and author. Being Influenced by his teacher Frederick Corder, Bax wallowed in Wagner's music to the almost total exclusion, until he became aware of Richard Strauss and any other composers. He also discovered and privately studied the works of Debussy during his study period in Royal Academy of Music. Bax later became fascinated with Ireland and Celtic culture, which became a strong influence on his early development.

This Viola Sonata was completed in 1922 and was dedicated to the well-known British viola virtuoso, Lionel Tertis. The whole work begins with a flowing Molto moderato which at times rises to an agitated feverish pitch. The calm and cantabile motive in the very beginning, is like a girl lying in the world of crystal glass, faintly heard the ancient call, slowly opened her eyes to look at the world. Music in the middle part is cheerful and layered, and the varied timbre changes depict the colorful world in the girl's eyes. The overall tone of the first movement is fresh and mild, like a Japanese garden in autumn.

The middle movement, Allegro energico ma non troppo presto, is restless and thrusting. It is compact and dramatic, evoking a commanding, sometimes decisive, sometimes tragic male character from the war era. The work ends in somber fashion with a Molto lento. The third movement is heavy and philosophical, with irregular rhythms and complex and discordant harmonies, which always make listeners feel uneasy and struggling in the music. Finally, head to tail echo, storm back to calm. This sonata exquisitely shows the composer's thoughts on life.

The critic Neville Cardus wrote of Bax's music: The paradox is that Bax's methods, his idiom and tonal atmosphere are impersonal: that is to say, there is no direct unfolding of an individual state of mind or soul as we find in Elgar or Gustav Mahler. Yet there is no mistaking the Bax physiognomy or psychology: always through the gloom and thickets of the symphonies the warm rays of an approachable, lovable man and nature may be felt.

In Bax's music, we can hear Nordic elements, Eastern colors, light and dark in humanity, the ups and downs of The Times. He endowed the fluidity of music to his poem and composed musical works with literal beauty. The richness of the content, the beauty of the language and the uniqueness of the style really make people love and look forward to appreciating Bax's music.

Programme notes by Cao Lan.