



SENIOR RECITAL

DANISH MUBIN, VIOLA
BEATRICE LIN, PIANO

4TH MAY 2021 | 3PM
YST CONCERT HALL
BACH | KNOX | HINDEMITH | PAGANINI

VIOLA SENIOR RECITAL

Danish Mubin, viola

Beatrice Lin, piano

4th May 2021 (Tuesday), 3pm

YST Concert Hall

Programme

Johann Sebastian Bach

Violin Sonata No.1 for solo viola (selected movements) (11')

- I. Adagio
- II. Fuga

Garth Knox

Quartet for One (7')

Intermission 10 mins

Paul Hindemith

Der Schwanendreher (25')

- I. *Zwischen Berg und Tiefem Tal*
- II. *Nun Laube, Lindlein Laube*
- III. *Seid ihr nicht der Schwanendreher*

Paganini (arr. Primrose)

La Campanella (5')

About the Performer

Malaysian born Danish Mubin is currently an undergraduate student at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music under the tutelage of Lionel Tan. His previous teachers include Dr. Andrew Filmer and Mr Jiri Heger. Before entering the conservatory, he was studying A levels at Tenby's School Setia Eco Park with full scholarship.

An aspiring violist who is always refining his artistry, Danish has been participating music festivals across Europe and Asia, notably the Pablo Casals Festival in France and Chofu International Music Festival in Japan. Besides that, he also has a strong interest in orchestra playing, being selected to participate in the Asian Youth Orchestra and also frequently performing as a guest musician with Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra.

Bach's Violin Sonata No.1 BWV1001 (transcribed for solo viola)

- I. Adagio
- II. Fuga

Regarded as one of the most important pieces in the violin repertory, the complete Sonata and Partitas were believed to have been composed in 1720 back at Cöthen. Despite its popularity today in the string repertory, it has been misunderstood for a long time. Back in the nineteenth century, the collection was only regarded as material for study purposes. Even famous composers like Mendelssohn and Schumann believed that the collection was only performable with a piano accompaniment, which is against the intentions of the composer itself.

The title page of the Solo Violin Sonatas and Partitas designates them as Sei Solo a violinist senza basso accompagnato. Perhaps significantly, the words Sei Solo are spaced apart from the rest of the title, and do not constitute correct Italian. (The correct Italian for "six solos" is Sei Soli.) Could Bach have made a grammatical mistake? Yet in all the other instances of plurals, Bach manages to have the -i ending. As has been noted by scholars, Sei Solo translates to "you are alone." With Bach's penchant for double entendre, could he have meant something other than that the violinist plays alone?

The complete sonata was modelled on the Italian tradition of the sacred church sonata (sonata da chiesa) with four sections: a slow introduction followed by a fugue, a lyrical slow movement, and a fast finale. But today you will be hearing the selected sections of the sonata, consisting of the Adagio and the Fugue. The Adagio begins seriously with a four-note C-minor chord, the two lower strings ringing freely. The melody is elaborate, weaving long lines between harmonic pillars. This then follows up with the Fugue, which is concise yet architecturally astonishing. The movement perfectly showcase the definition of the word fugue itself, a complex musical structure literally meaning 'flight' or 'escape' in which the different voices enter successively, each giving 'chase' to the previous one.

Garth Knox Quartet for One

- I. Nervous – Solo viola
- II. Expressivo – Cello and viola
- III. Waltz – 2nd violin, viola and cello
- IV. Virtuoso – Quartet

This is the foreword that is being written by the composer himself:

During the lockdown period in spring 2020, when all concerts were cancelled due to the Corona virus crisis, and playing music in ensembles was not possible, many musicians began to explore other ways of making music socially. Just as lonely children invent imaginary play-friends to keep themselves company, my own frustrated desire to play with others led me to invent some imaginary colleagues and to explore in a light-hearted way the possibilities of performing chamber music with them.

The result is this piece *Quartet for One*, which all happens inside the head of a viola player who dreams of giving a concert with a string quartet in front of a large appreciative audience. Although alone, the violist really does play a quartet! Each of the four strings on the viola corresponds to an instrument of the quartet, and as each instrument enters, the violist occupies 'their' chair and plays on 'their' string (the stage is set with 4 stands and 4 chairs). Thus the opening solo is played on only one string, followed by a duo on two strings, a trio on three strings and the piece is concluded by a rousing virtuoso finale led by the first violin with the participation of all four strings. To imitate the richness of the deep cello sound the bottom string of the viola is lowered to A.

Paul Hindemith Der Schwanendreher

- I. *Zwischen Berg und Tiefem Tal*
- II. *Nun Laube, Lindlein Laube*
- III. *Seid ihr nicht der Schwanendreher*

Hindemith's *Der Schwanendreher* (or referred to as '*The Swan Turner*') was composed back in 1935, shortly after he finished composing his opera work '*Matthias der Maler*'. This interesting title for the viola concerto was taken from *Altdeutsches Liederbuch*, a German songbook that was published by Franz Böhme back in 1877. The piece consists of three movements, all of which are based on old German folksongs from Böhme's songbook. It showcases his interests of using the simplicity of folk music as his musical basis. Hindemith links altogether the songs by writing an underlined story or poem in the preface of the concerto:

A musician comes among merry company and performs the music he has brought with him from afar: songs grave and gay and at the end a dance. According to his ability and inspiration he expands and embellishes the tunes, preludes, and fantasizes, like a true musician.

The first movement, "*Zwischen Berg und tiefem Tal*" (Between Mountain and deep Valleys), starts off with the viola solo as a colourful prelude that represents well a wandering minstrel starting a show for his/her audience. followed by the orchestra clearly playing the old German tune, in style reminiscent of the sixteenth century. Virtuoso, original material for the soloist then continues to alternate with statements of the tune. The movement gradually grows in dramatic intensity and rhythmic activity, ending almost unexpectedly with a nice, clean major chord in the brass.

The second movement is where the viola showcase its meditative, lyrical vein together with the harp followed, after a while, with an exchange with the old tune, "*Nun laube, Lindlein laube,*" (Leaf out little Linden tree) performed in chorale style by the orchestra with melancholic comments from the soloist. A spritely middle section based on "*Der Gutzgauh auf dem Zaune sass*" (The Cuckoo sat on the Fence) is a fugato (rather like a round), with the woodwinds taking the lead, one at a time, until the viola joins them, building to a climax at the end of the section. A return to the opening ideas—but varied (the old melody now appears as a kind of *cantus firmus*)—ends the movement.

"*Seid ihr nicht der Schwanendreher*" (Are you not the Swan Turner) is the final movement of the piece where it talks about the man who turned the swans as they are roasted on the spit. It starts off with a jolly statement of the borrowed tune by the full orchestra. Twelve variations follow, but, you won't always be able to track them easily, for Hindemith pulls out all the stops in the variation technique, constantly changing almost every aspect of composition as the bustling variations unfold. They start somewhat simply, led by the woodwinds, but gradually become more complex. Soon, all the activity yields to somewhat softer, more lyrical ideas—lightly scored. But, the bustle soon resumes with a happy race to the quick, emphatic conclusion. It all goes very well without the violins.

Paganini La Campanella (arr. Primrose)

Nicolo Paganini was considered to be the greatest violinist of his day, and like so many contemporary and past virtuoso performers, he composed solo works for his own performances. History is full of great instrumentalists and composers who did the same – Mozart and Beethoven to name but a few. But none had the technical where-with-all as Paganini, and in fact much of the music that he wrote was so difficult that it was unplayable by any of his contemporaries.

Since then, many composers and performers have taken inspirations of Paganini's pieces to create a completely new pieces or transcriptions. The piece *La Campanella* for viola and piano is also no exception, as it was arranged by William Primrose, one of the greatest violists of his time.

The piece itself is taken from the last movement of Paganini's second concerto, and is often taken out of context for concert performances. It derives its name from the bell that accompanies much of the movement. Like most of Paganini's output, it is filled with all of the pyro-techniques –, scales in thirds, sixths and of course fast and dazzling passagework. But it also has charm, beautiful singing melodies (influenced by the Italian opera), and a light-hearted sense that makes it a regular audience pleaser!