

Li Xin

Clarinet Master's Recital

Johannes Brahms, John Ireland, Luciano Berio

With

Liu Jia
Liu Jia Qi
Teo Li Chin

8pm, 26 November 2021, Concert Hall
Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music



YST

Yong Siew Toh
Conservatory
of Music



NUS
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PROGRAMME

Johannes Brahms

Clarinet Trio in A minor, Op. 114

I. Allegro

II. Adagio

III. Andantino Grazioso

IV. Allegro

Li Xin (M.Mus2), clarinet

Liu Jia, piano

Liu Jia Qi (B.Mus3), cello

John Ireland

Fantasy-Sonata for clarinet and piano in E-flat major

Li Xin (M.Mus2), clarinet

Li-Chin Teo, piano

Luciano Berio

Sequenza IXa for solo clarinet

Li Xin (M.Mus2), clarinet

About the performer

Li Xin is currently pursuing Master's degree in clarinet performance under the tutelage of Mr Ma Yue, who is one of the most important mentors for his music career. Li Xin was one of the first batch of students at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, he is feeling fresh and enthusiasm everyday when he is back to this place where influenced him the most! He is also surrounded with full of passion and motivation again from the people who influenced him and from new friends through the collaboration of playing and studying.

Programme Notes

Johannes Brahms, Clarinet Trio in A minor, Op. 114

Brahms came back from semi-retirement to write this trio for the clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld. Brahms admired Mühlfeld so much that he would go on to write a quintet and two sonatas for him.

The trio is both mellow and deep, by turns, dark then golden. Despite a possible expectation of shorter or lighter that "clarinet trio" might suggest, this is a full-length Classical-Romantic epic with a wealth of themes, moods, developments and dramatic narratives. The texture is balanced among the three instruments placing them in bold relief and perfectly exploiting their finest attributes with both cello and clarinet sharing the feature, lyrical roles. In the four-movement plan, the outer two (first and last) project a dark and melancholic mood from the lonely cello solo in the beginning to the decisive crush of the final cadence at the end, a rough outer skin that nests the sweetest fruit within. Both inner movements glow with a gentle, delicate brightness reminding many of Brahms's late intermezzi, his touching soft spots. But both the singing Adagio and the lilting Andantino are refined,

nuanced expressions of Brahms's mastery of scoring, thematic variation, lyrical invention and formal elegance. All of this melds into a supreme musicality of beauty, affect and design at once idiomatic and eternal. Though perhaps less well known than the beloved quintet, the trio may well be finer.

John Ireland, Fantasy-Sonata for clarinet and piano in E-flat major

This work was composed by John Ireland in 1943, his only extant piece for solo clarinet and one of his last major compositions before his retirement. It was inspired by the Roman comic poem "Satyricon" and by Ireland's experience in being evacuated from Jersey during the Second World War. Fiona Richards has suggested that the work also contains "allusions to Ireland's attraction to younger men".

The through-composed piece is written in a very loose sonata form with frequent shifts in tempo, mood, and tonal centre,^[2] but has no clear resolution, as would be expected in a typical sonata. It has a lush and highly virtuosic piano part; Scott Goddard argued that "in all English music of the last half-century there has been no purer pianoforte writing than this". The clarinet part covers the instrument's entire range, incorporating both legato and rhythmic passages.

A reviewer from the News Chronicle, cited by Colin Lawson, noted that he "had never imagined that clarinet and piano could be combined so satisfactorily; nor that (by a mixture of tact and daring) they could form such an exciting ensemble".

Luciano Berio, Sequenza IXa for solo clarinet

Berio is considered the foremost Italian avant-garde composer of his time, and one of the most influential composers of the twentieth century. The series of fourteen Sequenzas was a long-standing project, spanning 30 years. Each of these pieces is written for a solo instrument, and demonstrates extensive

performance techniques. In virtually all of the Sequenzas, these techniques are intended to expand the boundaries of what was playable or singable on the respective instrument. The Sequenza series can be considered a manual of instrumental composing in the twentieth century.

Sequenza IXa is a work of increasingly great significance for the clarinet repertoire. It has become an integral part of the unaccompanied solo standard clarinet repertoire in the twentieth century, and it provides clarinetists with a wealth of opportunities for exploring new techniques and freedom for musical interpretation. A glance at the score immediately reveals a host of difficulties for the performer, including a variety of rhythmic patterns, dynamic changes, and multiphonics, as well as the physical stamina required over the length of the piece.

Sequenza IXa, like the flute Sequenza, can be said to use the same “nonlinguistic” type of melody. The most obvious and literal manner of achieving more than one voice with a monophonic instrument is through multiphonics. Another way to simulate polyphony in a monophonic instrument is to use a type of technique Bach uses in his pieces, “compound melody.” Following the idea of using two pitch–class collections differently, one melody tends to appear in the same register, whereas the other traverses the range of the instrument in very wide leaps and with great variety. [15] Berio developed these two pitch–class collections experimenting with “temporal, dynamic, pitch, and morphological dimensions” to generate a type of polyphony. These different musical elements are recognizable through the transformational processes

Berio has described music as “...the constant search for an answer to something that continuously shifts.” He has further stated that “the search for a deep unity, is maybe the most exciting, the most profoundly experimental and the least functional aspect of its presence.”