

*Chang Qian*

*Violin Senior Recital*

*Brahms | Wieniawski*



YST  
Yong Siew Toh  
Conservatory  
of Music



*Apr 26th | 8:40pm*

*Pianist : Ge Xiaozhe*

26 April 2022 | TUESDAY

# *Chang Qian Violin Recital*

Ge Xiaozhe, *piano*

## **Programme**

BRAHMS

Violin Sonata No. 2 in A Major, Op. 100

I. Allegro amabile

II. Andante tranquillo — Vivace

III. Allegretto grazioso (quasi andante)

– Intermission 5 mins –

WIENIAWSKI

*Faust Fantaisie brillante*, Op. 20

*Variations on an Original Theme*

## ***Programme Notes***

### **Brahms Violin Sonata No. 2**

The Violin Sonata No. 2 in A major, Op. 100 ("Thun" or "Meistersinger"), by Johannes Brahms was written while spending the summer of 1886 in Thun in the Bernese Oberland, Switzerland.

It was a very fertile and refreshing time for Brahms. His friend, the Swiss pastor and poet Josef Victor Widmann, lived in Berne and they visited each other. He was also visited by the poet Klaus Groth and the young German contralto Hermine Spies. Both Groth and Brahms were somewhat enamoured of Spies. He found himself so invigorated by the genial atmosphere and surroundings that he said the area was "so full of melodies that one has to be careful not to step on any". In a short space of time, he produced, in addition to this violin sonata, the Cello Sonata No. 2 in F major, Op. 99, the Piano Trio No. 3 in C minor, Op. 101, and various songs.

The second Violin Sonata is the shortest and is considered the most lyrical of Brahms's three violin sonatas. It is also considered the most difficult of the three to bring off successfully, and to exhibit its balance of lyricism and virtuosity. It maintains a radiant, happy mood throughout.

By giving the work the formal title of "Sonata for Piano and Violin", rather than the more usual "Sonata for Violin and Piano", Brahms indicated the piano part was just as important as the violin part. In keeping with this, he allowed the piano to announce the opening theme. The first three notes of the first movement are very similar in both melody and harmony to the first three notes of "Walther's Prize Song" (*Morgendlich leuchtend im rosigen Schein*) from Richard Wagner's opera *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Therefore, the sonata has often been subtitled the "Meistersinger" Sonata. It is also sometimes called the "Thun" Sonata from the place of its creation.

Motifs from three of the songs Brahms wrote that summer with Hermine Spies's voice in

mind appear fleetingly in the sonata: "Wie Melodien zieht es mir leise durch den Sinn", Op. 105/1 ("Like melodies it steals softly through my mind"; words by Klaus Groth) makes an appearance in the second subject of the first movement. "Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer", Op. 105/2 ("Ever gentle is my slumber"; words by Hermann Lingg) and "Auf dem Kirchhofs", Op. 105/4 (words by Detlev von Liliencron) are quoted in the final movement. The song "Komm bald", Op. 97/5 ("Come soon"; words by Groth) is also said have provided thematic inspiration for the sonata.

An outstanding quotation of Brahms' own music can also be found at bar 89 in the last movement. Lied Meine liebe ist grün (Op. 63 no 5, poem by Felix Schumann, son of Robert and Clara, died in 1879) provides the dramatic portion of its melody corresponding to die glänzt wohl herab auf den Fliederbusch lyrics ('which gleams down on the lilac bush').

## **Variations on an Original Theme**

The Variations on an Original Theme, Op. 15, were composed in 1854 and published the



same year by Breitkopf and Hartel in Leipzig. It is a technically demanding piece, just like other works by Wieniawski, it required the performer to play difficult techniques such as staccato, left hand pizzicato, harmonics, octaves and chords with freedom. There is a 3-minute introduction in minor key before going to the theme in major key. This section reappears after the variations and is followed by a finale in the form of a brilliant waltz ending in a brilliant coda.

## **Faust Fantaisie brillante Op. 20**

Faust Fantaisie brillante Op. 20 was composed by Wieniawski, which was based on themes from Gounod's opera Faust.

The Faust theme was very popular in the 19th century. Composers used it in operas, vocal-instrumental and orchestra pieces, as well as in songs. Gounod's opera based on this theme enjoyed particular popularity in Wieniawski's times.

"Faust" Fantaisie consists of five sections ending with a short virtuoso finale. Clearly identifiable and contrasted with each other, the

particular sections differ in expression, which, among other things, is the effect of the change of key and tempo that always accompanies emergence of a new section. In addition, this brilliant virtuoso piece contains quite a lot of high difficulty technicals which are challenging for many soloist.

*Programme notes by Chang Qian.*