

26 November 2019 | TUESDAY

# *Chang Yun-Hua*

## *Piano Recital*

### **Programme**

**RAVEL**

*La Valse*

**ALBENIZ**

From *Iberia*, Book II

V. Almeria

**BALAKIREV**

*Islamey*, Oriental Fantasy, Op. 18

## ***About The Performer***



Born in Taiwan, ***Yun-Hua*** began piano lessons at the age of four. She has been actively participating in international music festivals since high school, such as Brancaloni International Music Festival and Amalfi Coast Music & Arts Festival. Yun-Hua has also won numerous awards, including the second prize of section A at the XXVI Roma International Piano Competition in 2016, and the first prize of the piano category at Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music Concerto Competition in 2019. Yun-Hua is now a third-year student, studying with Dr. Thomas Hecht.

## ***Programme Notes***

**Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)**

***La Valse***

The original idea of this piece started with the idea of a symphonic poem titled Wien (Vienna). Ravel was so fascinated by the waltz rhythm that he wanted to compose an orchestral piece using these very elements. After returning from World War I, Ravel reworked his idea of Wien and renamed the piece as *La Valse* after finishing it in 1920 as a commissioned ballet. Although rejected as a ballet, the piece made a huge success and it is now performed often as a concert work for orchestra. Besides the version for orchestra and his equally popular arrangement for two pianos, Ravel transcribed the work for solo piano as well. He gives us scene in the preface of the score, as follows: “Through breaks in the swirling crowds, waltzing couples may be glimpsed. Little by little they disperse: one makes out an immense hall filled with a whirling crowd. The stage is illuminated gradually. The light of the chandeliers peaks at the fortissimo. An Imperial Court, about 1855.”

**Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909) From Iberia, Book II**

**V. Almería**

Iberia is the peninsula located in southwest Europe, divided between current day Portugal and Spain. Albéniz finished composing Iberia a few months before his death. Possessing the rich experience of life and mature compositional techniques, Iberia is Albéniz’s most well-known masterpiece. This four-volume set of works contains three movements in each, and all of the movements were composed using different Spanish dance rhythms. Almería is a city in Andalusia, and the piece features rhythms found in the tarantas, the local dance style of Flamenco with a freely flowing character.

**Mily Balakirev (1837-1910)**  
***Islamey, Oriental Fantasy, Op. 18***

Balakirev was one of the composers who sought sounds that represented their respective nations. He collected folk songs from different places in Russia, and composed many pieces based on these tunes. *Islamey* is also the outcome of folk tunes exploration. Balakirev composed this piece in 1869, after his travel to Caucasus. As mentioned in his letter: "...Since I interested myself in the vocal music there, I made the acquaintance of a Circassian prince, who frequently came to me and played folk tunes on his instrument, that was something like a violin. One of them, called *Islamey*, a dance-tune, pleased me extraordinarily and with a view to the work I had in mind on *Tamara* I began to arrange it for the piano." Through these facts, we can indeed imagine the scenery of the Caucasus that Balakirev was impressed by, how the tune sounded on the string instrument, and how the inhabitants might have danced to such a piece.

*Programme notes by Chang Yun-Hua.*