

A JUNIOR RECITAL BY

KOH KAI JIE

Music by Beethoven, Lyapunov
and Szymanowski



26 November 2019 7:30 pm

Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music

Concert Hall

Free Admission

26 November 2019 | TUESDAY

Koh Kai Jie

Piano Recital

Programme

BEETHOVEN

Piano Sonata No. 27 in E minor, Op. 90

- I. Mit Lebhaftigkeit und durchaus mit Empfindung und Ausdruck
- II. Nicht zu geschwind und sehr singbar vorgetragen

LYAPUNOV

Transcendental Étude in C-sharp minor, Op. 11 No. 6 "Tempête"

SZYMANOWSKI

Variations in B-flat minor, Op. 3

About The Performer

Koh Kai Jie is a pianist studying in the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music with Associate Professor Albert Tiu. As a pianist, Kai Jie has achieved recognition, winning the second prizes in the National Piano and Violin Competition (Senior Category) and the Yamaha Piano Competition in 2013. He has also worked with eminent pianists Noriko Ogawa and Daejin Kim in masterclasses. An avid conductor, Kai Jie led a chamber orchestra comprising of YST musicians in the performance of Beethoven's Coriolan Overture, which was commended for his "insightful interpretation" by Dr Marc Rochester.

Programme Notes

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Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) wrote his Piano Sonata No. 27 in E minor, Op. 90 in 1814, after he went through an emotionally difficult period, causing his compositional output to drop markedly. It was after the renewed successes of his works Wellington's Victory and Fidelio that this sonata was composed after a 5-year hiatus in his output of piano sonatas. This sonata is unusually cast in two movements, with only a few other piano sonatas by Beethoven previously written in two movements, namely the Op. 54 and Op. 78. This sonata is given German performance directions rather than the traditional Italian markings, appearing in many of the late Beethoven piano sonatas. This is perhaps a means to convey the character of the music in greater detail and with deeper personal significance as a German himself.

The first movement is marked *Mit Lebhaftigkeit und durchaus mit Empfindung und Ausdruck*, which can be translated as "with liveliness and with feeling and expression throughout". Charles Rosen describes this movement as "despairing and impassioned, laconic almost to the point of reticence". Indeed, this music is restless and uncomfortable, switching from one idea to the next drastically without much elaboration, being extremely compact in its construction. This manner of composition is however completely reversed in the second movement, being chorale-like in its style throughout the entire movement. It is marked *Nicht zu geschwind und sehr singbar vorgetragen*, translated as "Not too quickly and to be performed in a very singing manner". This movement showcases Beethoven as a master melodist, being "devoted to the utmost luxuriance of lyric melodies", in the words of Donald Francis Tovey. Written in sonata-rondo form, the alluring main melody of the movement appears a total of five times, the first three times having the exact same notes written without any variation.

Sergei Lyapunov (1859-1924) was a Russian composer and pianist who was profoundly influenced by Balakirev. He composed the 12 Transcendental Études Op. 11 (1897-1905) in the keys which Franz Liszt omitted in his 12 Transcendental Études (1852) to complete the cycle of all 24 major and minor keys, which was Liszt's original idea but was never completed. Dedicated to Franz Liszt, this set of études paid homage to Liszt, most notably in the last étude title "Elegy in memory of Liszt". The Transcendental Étude No. 6 is titled "Tempête", which means a tempest or storm. The storminess of the music is brought out through the eruptions in the music, made intense by the

sudden surges of rapid broken chords. This is contrasted by a passionate melody which melts into sweetness before the storm begins to howl once again.

Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937) was an influential Polish composer of the early 20th Century. His harmonically adventurous style of composition in his early years was heavily influenced by Wagner, Scriabin and Strauss. However, Szymanowski composed his Variations in B-flat minor, Op. 3 in 1901- 1903, even before his early style had been fully developed. During this time, he was studying with Zygmunt Noskowski in Warsaw, and thus this set of variations could be a 'student composition', as it is largely conventional in its structure, imitating models of variations established by the masters of the Romantic era. Nevertheless, this work still displays Szymanowski's individuality which would be increasingly developed in the years after. It contains glimpses of the chromaticism which would saturate his later mature works. The third variation, *Andantino quasi tempo di mazurka*, also foreshadows his later involvement in Polish folk music and his attempt to forge a Polish national style.

This set of variations is based on an original theme by Szymanowski, which is grim and sombre in mood, firmly rooted in the dark key of B-flat minor. It has 12 variations in very contrasting styles from one another, starting off with one that is similar in character to the theme but with added decoration. The music then goes through variations of drastically different moods – stormy, flashy, sentimental, funereal, casual, and even ethereal. The piece culminates in a grandiose final variation which explodes in an almost over the top fashion, bringing the piece to a declamatory close.

Programme notes by Koh Kai Jie.