

PHOTO BY YUJUN MA



**CONCERT ARTISTS GUILD WINNER:
YI-NUO WANG, PIANO**

Sunday, November 10, 2019, at 3pm
Foellinger Great Hall, salon-style

PROGRAM

CONCERT ARTISTS GUILD WINNER: YI-NUO WANG, PIANO

Béla Bartók
(1881-1945)

Sonata, Sz. 80
Allegro moderato
Sostenuto e pesante
Allegro molto

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Eight Piano Pieces, Op. 76
Capriccio in F-sharp Minor
Capriccio in B Minor
Intermezzo in A-flat Major
Intermezzo in B-flat Major
Capriccio in C-sharp Minor
Intermezzo in A Major
Intermezzo in A Minor
Capriccio in C Major

20-minute intermission

Chen Yi
(b. 1953)

Ba Ban

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)

Six Selections
Piece in D Minor from Three Pieces
Daisies, Op. 38, No. 3
Prelude in B Minor, Op. 32, No. 10
Prelude in G-flat Major, Op. 23, No. 10
Étude in D Minor, Op. 39, No. 8
Étude in D Major Op. 39, No. 9

Audiences and rising young performers share the stage of the Foellinger Great Hall in these events, fostering a close mutual connection. The stage ticket price includes light refreshments; balcony seating, which does not include refreshments, is available at a reduced price. The 2019-20 series includes Concert Artists Guild Winner: Yi-Nuo Wang, piano (November 10); Naumburg International Violin Competition Winner: Grace Park, violin with Joseph Liccardo, piano (January 26); Young Concert Artists Winner: Jonathan Swensen, cello (February 16); and the Krannert Center Debut Artist (April 26). For more information about these events, please visit KrannertCenter.com/calendar.

Yi-Nuo Wang appears by arrangement with:

Concert Artists Guild
135 East 57th St, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10022
(212) 333.5200
www.concertartists.org

THANK YOU FOR SPONSORING THIS PERFORMANCE

With deep gratitude, Krannert Center thanks all 2019-20 Patron Sponsors and Corporate and Community Sponsors, and all those who have invested in Krannert Center. Please view their names later in this program and join us in thanking them for their support.

This event is supported by:



JAMES ECONOMY
Special Support of Classical Music

HELP SUPPORT THE FUTURE OF THE ARTS. BECOME A KRANNERT CENTER SPONSOR BY CONTACTING OUR ADVANCEMENT TEAM TODAY:

KrannertCenter.com/Give • advancement@krannertcenter.illinois.edu • 217.333.1629

PROGRAM NOTES

In this comprehensive program, Yi-Nuo Wang takes on great piano works by four composers who represent the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. To do all this in one sitting is indeed a challenge for the performer and a delight for the audience.

BÉLA BARTÓK

Born March 25, 1881, in Sânnicolau Mare,
Romania

Died September 26, 1945, in New York City,
New York

Sonata, Sz. 80

Béla Bartók's place in musical history is unique since he represents no one school of music. At a time when the German traditions of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and Brahms were giving way to the Second Viennese School led by Arnold Schoenberg, Bartók stood alone. While his early music was fed by the Romantic traditions of Brahms and Wagner, it is his own unique exploration of folk music, dissonance, rhythmic vigor, and color, and a sense of the spiritual that most govern his important work. In a 1905 letter to his mother, he said knowingly, "I prophesy, I have foreknowledge, that this spiritual loneliness is to be my destiny." Despite that loneliness, he breathed new life into an old system without joining the Serialists who would themselves ultimately suffer a kind of isolation.

With his friend Zoltán Kodály, he compiled a collection of Hungarian folk songs, a project that absorbed him from 1905 to 1921. This exploration was to influence his music greatly, but a word must be said about that. While he ardently espoused Hungarian nationalism, he is also quoted in József Ujfalussy's 1971 biography as having said, "The composer does not use genuine

peasant melodies, but devises instead something imitating a peasant melody." For Bartók, the art lay in complex devising, not simple imitation.

The originality we associate with Bartók plays out freely in his piano sonata of 1926. In the first movement, *Allegro moderato*, for example, there is a use of artful repetition written long before the advent of Minimalism. Almost any pianist will testify to the difficulties of repeated notes. They sound simple, but to the contrary, can present the fiercest of virtuosic challenges complicated further by subtle changes that must not be missed. Bartók's rhythmic pulsing and close harmonic progressions also present a challenge to the pianist. To this remarkable movement, Bartók offers a final crashing statement.

Repetition continues in the second movement, *Sostenuto pesante*, but this time with a solemn air. The close, discordant harmonies also continue but are often juxtaposed beside wide harmonic leaps that underscore the daring of the work that continues even today. The *pesante* direction of the movement should not tempt us into associating it too closely with folk music. While that was an important influence in Bartók's work, he never replicates but only creates. An abrupt ending completes this movement.

The pulsing seconds and the formidable octaves of the third movement, *Allegro molto*, remind us once again of Bartók's originality and gritty virtuosic demands. If there is a gaiety about this movement, it is a complex one even if that suggests an oxymoron. The conclusion is again abrupt, but this time with a new definition.

The 1926 piano sonata put Bartók in a new direction of modernism as clearly evidenced in the work. Known as his “piano year,” 1926 also brought his remarkable *Out of Doors* suite, his first piano concerto, and *Nine Little Pieces*. In this late period from 1926 until his death in 1945, known as “Synthesis of East and West,” Bartók clearly found his own singular voice that established him as a foremost composer of the 20th century.

JOHANNES BRAHMS

Born May 7, 1833, in Hamburg, Germany
Died April 3, 1897, in Vienna, Austria
Eight Piano Pieces, Op. 76

No composer better represents a melding of Romantic style and Classical form than Brahms. Furthermore, within his lifetime he experienced both the waning of Romanticism and the birth of the controversial Second Viennese School led by Arnold Schoenberg. Nor was Brahms free from a part in this latter musical evolution as evidenced by some of his late works and by Schoenberg’s bow to him in his essay “Brahms the Progressive.” The famous late-19th-century controversy that pitted Brahms against Wagner and divided the musical world would seem of less significance if it had not inspired the French to take a new path with Impressionism. Within all these developments, however, Brahms maintained his individual stamp of elegant form, adventurous harmony, gorgeous melody, and grand sweep of emotion, all of which are clearly evident in *Eight Piano Pieces, Op. 76*.

To view these eight pieces as “miniatures” is misleading since they are hardly small in both their musical impact and variety. In fact, they are supreme examples of Brahms’ use of what Arnold Schoenberg would later call the “developing variation,” a complex form in which an entire piece springs from a single motive but with infinite variety as exemplified in the *Eight Piano Pieces*.

As noted, Brahms’ *Eight Piano Pieces* are in two forms, four as capriccios and four as intermezzos. A capriccio can be defined as a free-form piece with a playful quality. An intermezzo we associate with a short movement connecting the main parts of a musical work. Once again, the standard definitions of those terms are stretched in the case of Brahms’ *Eight Piano Pieces* with their great variety and singular genius. Even Brahms himself had trouble with the definition as indicated when he wrote to his publisher Simrock and asked if he could “think of a title” for the works. The set was composed between 1871 and 1878, which could be called the beginning of Brahms’ maturity and fame marked by the appearance of such works as his first string quartet and his first symphony.

The beautiful No. 1 has a certain ominous quality we might not always associate with a capriccio. No. 2, however, is more capricious despite its minor key. No. 3 is highly lyrical but with an important use of the left hand. A new light shines in No. 4. Intensity increases in No. 5, although it is still melodic and even a bit capricious for Brahms who is seldom associated with that quality. No. 6 also has a certain happiness about it, which might be traced to Brahms’ personal life at the time. No. 7 is both melodic and profound, a combination Brahms accomplishes so well. He leaves us astounded in the final No. 8 with his use of the developing variation to its fullest.

CHEN YI

Born April 4, 1953, in Guangzhou, China
Ba Ban

Chinese violinist and composer Chen Yi was the first Chinese woman to receive a Master of Arts in music from the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing and was a finalist for the 2006 Pulitzer Prize for her composition *Si Ji* (Four Seasons). Her other awards include those from the Koussevitzky Foundation, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. She and her husband, composer Zhou Long, are professors of composition at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory.

Ba Ban, composed in 1999, is a daring and startling work with many challenges in its modern harmonies, repeated notes, wide use of the keyboard, and growing power.

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF

Born April 1, 1873, in Starorussky Uyezd
Died March 28, 1943, in Beverly Hills, California
Six Selections

Piece in D Minor from Three Pieces

Daisies, Op. 38, No. 3

Prelude in B Minor, Op. 32, No. 10

Prelude in G-flat Major, Op. 23, No. 10

Étude in D Minor, Op. 39, No. 8

Étude in D Major Op. 39, No. 9

The troubled Sergei Rachmaninoff left war-torn Russia for good in 1917 and moved to America. This settled his financial problems but not the sense of displacement that plagued him. The melancholy that pervades his work could be seen as reflective of Rachmaninoff's own sense of musical as well as geographical alienation. As the Second Viennese School was revolutionizing musical thought, he confessed that he felt alien in that new world of composition even though

he tried to absorb it. Despite his comments smacking of self-deprecation, Rachmaninoff has left us with an irreplaceable body of music that still attracts large numbers of listeners and players.

The *Piece in D Minor* is one of Rachmaninoff's last works not published until after his death. As expected, it is elegiac in mood yet rich in the beautiful harmonies we associate with his work. In a sunnier mood, *Daisies, Op. 38, No. 3* is an arrangement of the third of Rachmaninoff's set of six songs composed in September of 1916 and the final works composed before his self-imposed exile from his home country. While he was beset with many problems at the time, one positive aspect of his life was his relationship with young soprano Nina Koshets who, with Rachmaninoff, gave the premiere of the songs in Moscow on October 24, 1917.

Rachmaninoff joined the ranks of such notable composers as Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, and Scriabin by composing preludes in all the major and minor keys. He began with his famous *Prelude in C-Sharp Minor, Op. 3, No. 2* in 1892, which was part of a set of five pieces entitled *Morceaux de fantaisie*. This was followed by Op. 23, a set of ten preludes written between 1901 and 1903. He completed the project in 1910 with the 13 preludes of Op. 32.

The preludes Yi-Nuo Wang has chosen for this program represent an artistically satisfying revelation of Rachmaninoff's best imprints: sweeping melody, rhythmic and harmonic complexity, profound respect for form, and a passionate Romanticism. Rachmaninoff's preludes stand alone in their virtuosic challenges.

Prelude in B Minor, Op. 32, No. 10 is the longest and most fully developed of this set of 13 preludes composed in 1910. A sadly lyrical opening is followed by an extended chorale-like passage that builds to the unbelievable power singular to Rachmaninoff. A dramatic pause interrupts before a return to the opening statement and a quiet resolution that only adds to the profoundly moving quality of the work.

From the 10 Op. 23 preludes of 1903, we hear *Prelude in G-flat Major, Op. 23, No. 10*, which seems like somewhat of a divergence from Rachmaninoff's powerful style. Its grave tempo marking brings a stately elegy we do not always associate with Rachmaninoff, but one with an underlying spirit of hope.

As Rachmaninoff achieved genius in his preludes, so did he in his eight études of *Études Tableaux, Op. 33* and the nine from his *Études Tableaux, Op. 39*. From Op. 39 we hear the stunning *Étude in D Minor, Op. 39, No. 8* and *Étude in D Major Op. 39, No. 9*, an interesting and contrasting combination in and of itself. While No. 8 could be considered the gentler of the two études, its keyboard demands are formidable with its strong octave-playing underscoring the lush harmonies. No. 9 is unquestionably powerful and virtuosic in its strong and dramatic chordal format.

©2019 Lucy Miller Murray

PROFILE

Chinese pianist **YI-NUO WANG** was selected as First Prize winner of the 2018 Concert Artists Guild International Competition, which is just the latest in a series of impressive first-prize performances, along with the 2017 Wideman International Piano Competition in Louisiana. She is also a winner of the 2019 “Charlotte White” Career Grant awarded by the Salon de Virtuosi in New York City. Among the many performance prizes awarded to her with these victories, she will make her New York recital debut at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall during the 2019-20 season in addition to an appearance at Lincoln Center’s prestigious Mostly Mozart Festival.

An active performer in China, Europe, and the United States, Wang recently earned her Performer’s Diploma under the tutelage of the eminent pianist Alessio Bax at Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas, Texas. While at SMU, she appeared in multiple concerto performances as well as numerous recitals and chamber music concerts, including collaborations with cellist Andres Diaz and with the Escher String Quartet. Her upcoming itinerary features recitals in New York and Florida and concerto engagements in California and Texas.

Her recent North American performances include the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra and the Meadows Symphony Orchestra of SMU in Dallas, and such major festivals as PianoTexas, Morningside Music Bridge in Calgary, Canada, the International Keyboard Institute & Festival in New York City, and the Chautauqua Institution.

Internationally, Wang has been a featured soloist with the Academic Symphony Orchestra of the National Philharmonic Society of Ukraine and the Romanian Mihail Jora Philharmonic Orchestra in Italy. She has also given numerous solo piano recitals in China—including cities such as Beijing, Qingdao, Hangzhou, Wuhan, Shenzhen, Kunming, Ningbo, and Dalian—as well as in Madrid, Spain, and Jakarta, Indonesia.

In addition to her most recent first prize successes, she has also garnered top honors at numerous competitions: the Meadows Concerto Competition at SMU; the Artist Recognition Scholarship Awards Competition at New York City’s International Keyboard Institute & Festival; the Hamamatsu International Piano Academy Competition in Japan; the First Indonesia Pusaka International Piano Competition in Jakarta; the International Competition for Young Pianists in Memory of Vladimir Horowitz in Ukraine; and the Chautauqua Piano Competition.

Born in Beijing, Wang began playing piano at age four and went on to study at both the Music Elementary and Secondary schools at the prestigious Central Conservatory of Music (CCOM) in Beijing. In the fall of 2016, she was awarded a full scholarship for her Performer’s Diploma at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, and she now lives in New York while pursuing her undergraduate degree at The Juilliard School as a student of Dr. Robert McDonald.

CONCERT ARTISTS GUILD

The Concert Artists Guild's mission is to discover, nurture, and promote young musicians. Since 1951, CAG has helped more than 500 young musicians launch concert careers. Winners of CAG's annual competition receive comprehensive management support, including a debut recital on the CAG Presents Series at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, concert bookings, opportunities through the CAG Commissioning Program and CAG Records label, marketing, publicity, and mentorship.

Notable alumni artists include violinists Jennifer Koh, Joseph Lin (Juilliard Quartet), and Eugene Drucker (Emerson Quartet); pianists Barry Douglas, Michael Brown, and Daniel Hsu; clarinetists David Shifrin and David Krakauer; flutists Carol Wincenc, Marina Piccinini, and MacArthur Fellow Claire Chase; groundbreaking ensembles Imani Winds, the Brasil Guitar Duo, and Sybarite5; and Grammy-winning ensembles Pacifica and Parker String Quartets, Los Angeles Guitar Quartet, and MacArthur Award winner Eighth Blackbird.