

Yong Siew Toh
Conservatory
of Music

YST



A Junior Recital by **KENNIS ANG**

CLAUDE DEBUSSY
Images II, L120

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN
'Heroic' Polonaise, Op.53

SERGEI PROKOFIEV
Toccata, Op.11

26 November 2020 | 8pm

YST Concert Hall

Livestream



26 November | Thursday

Ang Wenxi Kennis

Piano Recital

PROGRAMME

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Images II, L120

I. Cloches à travers les feuilles

II. Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut

III. Poissons d'or

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

"Heroic" Polonaise in A-flat Major, Op. 53

SERGEI PROKOFIEV

Toccata in D Minor, Op. 11

About The Performer

Kennis is a 19-year old Singaporean pianist currently under the tutelage of Professor Thomas Hecht at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music. She has received numerous awards for her performances at piano festivals and competitions, such as the National Piano and Violin Competition, the biennial SMTA Performers' Festival, Young Talents Project and Yamaha Piano Competitions. Always on the lookout to improve on her pianistic skills, she has also participated in a number of masterclasses by renowned artists such as Aaron Shorr, Dina Parakhina and Zhang Haochen, to name a few. Among the many concerts Kennis has given since an early age, her most memorable one was for the late President Nathan at President's Challenge 15th Anniversary Commemorative Dinner at The Istana. Kennis believes that music tells stories that cannot be expressed through mere words, and hence loves to share them with the audience during her performances.

Programme Notes

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862-1918)

Images II, L120

I. Cloches à travers les feuilles

II. Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut

III. Poissons d'or

"There is nothing more musical than a sunset. He who feels what he sees will find no more beautiful example of development in all that book which, alas, musicians read but too little - The Book of Nature".

Debussy was always an avid lover of nature, and much of his works were inspired by the sounds and images he gathered from the natural world. Seeking to paint pictures with tones, the Father of Impressionism often retreated to quiet and spacious areas away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, where he would write music straying from the "traditional" rules of form and harmony. His second book of Images is no exception, consisting of three pieces portraying the different beauties of nature.

Cloches à travers les feuilles (Bells through the Leaves) is constructed upon a whole-tone scale, mimicking the chiming of church bells amidst the quiet rustling of leaves. These are blended with tones and elements of the Javanese gamelan which Debussy was so intrigued by, creating a looming sense of mystery and sonority throughout.

Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut (And the Moon sets over the Temple that Was) is arguably one of the most enchanting and hypnotising works written for the piano. Debussy evokes Asian tones and timbres whilst crafting a more

fragmented and atmospheric soundscape, depicting the stillness of the night and the moonbeams upon the ancient, abandoned Greek temple.

Poissons d'or (Goldfish), one of Debussy's most famed piano works, was inspired by a painting of 2 gold-coloured fish that he owned. Utilising brilliant and rapid passages as well as graceful transitions to imitate the rapid yet elegant darting movements of these tiny aquatic creatures underwater, this piece is an active and virtuosic masterpiece which makes evident Debussy's style and fondness of "painting music".

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN (1810-1849) **"Heroic" Polonaise in A-flat major, Op. 53**

"The inspiration! The force! The vigour! There is no doubt that such a spirit must be present in the French Revolution. From now on this polonaise should be a symbol, a heroic symbol."

Chopin was never too fond of bestowing descriptive names on his compositions, and when he did, there were often significant meanings and symbolisation behind the piece. A patriot with a strong love for his homeland, this polonaise served as a musical homage to Poland, bursting with grandeur and victory whilst passionately exploiting the true power and glory of the piano.

A poised and dignified national dance, this polonaise adopts a distinguished character and typical rhythmic formulas as per Chopin's other polonaises. However, dramatic swings and whirlwinds of emotions start making their presence known as the piece unfolds. Rapid scales and arpeggios, some of which in obscure intervals of perfect fourths contribute to the forward-moving and gripping effect the piece has on its listeners, while the ostinato of rapid descending bass octaves in the Trio are said to mimic hoofbeats of a cavalry charge. Although Chopin's usual poignant and poetic melodies are not as apparent in the bravura and forthright heroicness of this piece, they do surface in the lyrical and harmonically beautiful interlude, right before the thunderously grand main theme returns for one final time.

SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891-1953) **Toccata in D minor, Op.11**

Prokofiev was a Russian composer known not only for his notoriously difficult works, but the sarcasm and fierce dissonances that so often acted as driving forces in his music. Angularity with unexpected twists and jarring are often found peppered throughout his pieces, evidence of Prokofiev's constant pushing of boundaries and experimentation with new musical grounds.

His Toccata in D minor is known globally as an infamously challenging showpiece, demanding unfaltering energy and stamina from beginning to end.

A series of 'D's mark the start, played interchangeably between the right and left hand evenly in semiquavers - a consistent rhythm that propels the piece forward. Percussive and dissonant elements maintain their presence as erratic jarring notes and chords create a steadily increasing sense of tension and anxiety. One would imagine that such motor rhythm may potentially get relentlessly repetitive, but Prokofiev ingeniously keeps the music on edge at all times through the use of unexpected dialogues and aggressive dissonances between the multiple layers of the piece.

This toccata allows, or rather encourages one's imagination to run wild - it may be known as a fiendishly technical piece, but more than that, it is truly a thrilling showcase of one's creativity.

Programme notes by Ang Wenxi Kennis.