

# FIERY FANTASIES



25 NOVEMBER 2021 • 8.20PM  
YST CONCERT HALL

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JONAH RYAN KWEK LIM JIN (B.MUS3)  
JUNIOR RECITAL

# Biography



Jonah Ryan Kwek Lim Jin is a Singaporean Classical Pianist pursuing a Bachelor of Music (Hons) at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music (YST), National University of Singapore (NUS). He majors in Piano Performance, under the tutelage of Dr. Thomas Hecht. Jonah joined the conservatory at the age of 15 under the YST Young Artist Programme, which is offered to students with outstanding performance abilities until enrolment into the Bachelor of Music (Hons) programme.

An avid musician, Jonah has won the YST Concerto Competition 2021, performing Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 1 in D minor. He also won the Gold Prize in the Sugree Charoensook International Music Competition 2021. Jonah has also taken part in many masterclasses with renowned pianists such as Stephen Hough, Rolf-Dieter Arens and Scholtes & Janssens. An active performer, Jonah has performed at various venues in Singapore as a soloist and collaborative pianist.

In his own time, Jonah also ventures into arranging and performing music from other genres beyond Classical Music.



# DOMENICO SCARLATTI

## Keyboard Sonata in B minor, K.87

Domenico Scarlatti was an Italian composer, and the son of Alessandro Scarlatti. He spent a large portion of his life serving royal families of Portuguese and Spanish descent, and thus had many musical influences from those regions. He is known for writing a grand total of 555 Keyboard Sonatas!

Scarlatti's **Keyboard Sonata in B minor, K.87** consists of two big sections, similar to many of his other Sonatas. However, this Sonata is uniquely devoid of Spanish Flamenco musical elements.

This Sonata is one of his most poignant Sonatas, which soulfully mourns in deep resignation. Scarlatti brings out this tragedy through the use of many suspensions. It presents a pain that does not cry out in anguish, but is deeply resigned and tired of one's tragic fate, having borne this weight for far too long.



# ROBERT SCHUMANN

## Allegro in B minor, Op. 8

Robert Schumann was a German composer and pianist. He was an extremely prolific composer of piano works, and was known for associating musical motifs with characters and literary works in his music. Two of his most well-known characters are Florestan (passionate, exuberant, impulsive) and Eusebius (thoughtful, reflective).

Schumann's **Allegro in B minor, Op. 8** is one of his most unusual compositions. This piece was originally intended as the first movement to a Sonata, and hence is written in Sonata form. However, Schumann expands upon this traditional form, opening with a cadenza-like flourish in an unmeasured section, before the *Allegro* starts proper. This section returns in the recapitulation as well. These elements make the piece sound almost like a 'Fantasy'.

Perhaps a word that encapsulates this composition is 'eccentric', where the scenes, moods, colours and keys are always morphing. Even the dreamiest daydreams and strongest celebrations in the piece are extremely short-lived.

# ISAAC ALBÉNIZ

## Triana, from *Iberia* (Book II)

Isaac Albéniz was a Spanish pianist, composer and conductor. He is best known for his compositions for piano based on Spanish musical idioms.

**Iberia** is a suite for piano that consists of four books of three pieces each. It is Albéniz's best-known work and considered to be his masterpiece by many. Through the different pieces, Albéniz evokes different musical scenes and pictures of Spain.

**Triana** is the third piece from the second book of **Iberia**, and is also the name of a neighbourhood in the city of Seville, Spain. The piece paints a scene of the Gypsy quarter of Seville. Traditionally, many bull-fighters and Flamenco singers and dancers lived in the neighbourhood of Triana. Albéniz depicts this in his piece, where a rough and passionate yet noble bull-fighter sings a duet with a fair innocent maiden.

Many Flamenco musical elements are imitated in the piece such as textures of guitar strings being plucked, and gestures of stomping. This technically challenging piece is one which radiates character and brilliance, with one of its biggest challenges being the need to sound extremely simple despite the sheer amount of running notes and arpeggios.



# ALEXANDER SCRIABIN

## Fantasie in B minor, Op. 28

Alexander Scriabin was a Russian composer and pianist. In the earlier periods of his life, he wrote works that were relatively tonal, using a more Romantic style of composition. Later on, he developed a substantially more atonal and dissonant harmonic language, giving much more symbolism to his musical motifs.

This **Fantasie** was composed in 1900, and was one of Scriabin's earlier works. This piece is a single movement in Sonata form, and bridges his third and fourth Piano Sonatas. It is characterised by swirling oceanic waves and textures, filled with passionate outpourings. These oceanic waves give way to one of Scriabin's most touching and heart-melting melodies ever written. In the recapitulation, this melody is transformed from tenderness into grandeur, resulting in one of the most fulfilling moments ever written.

Much of the fantasy-like elements lie in the coda which turns improvisational, especially after arriving strongly in B major in the previous section. What follows is a long buildup to a triumphant finish, whereby the walls, pillars, and structures start shaking and crumbling from the sheer power of the piece.