

Neville's Violin Recital

28
APRIL
8.30PM



PIANIST:

DR CHERIE KHOR

STRING QUARTET:

REINA TEO

CHIEN CHIN

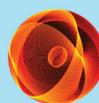
JOELLE HSU

OLIVIA CHUANG

SCHUBERT: RONDO IN A MAJOR FOR VIOLIN AND STRINGS

FRANCK: VIOLIN SONATA

RAVEL: TZIGANE



YST

Yong Siew Toh
Conservatory
of Music

PROGRAM

Schubert: Rondo in A Major for Violin and Strings, D438

Violin 1 – Reina Teo
Violin 2 – Chien Chin
Viola – Joelle Hsu
Cello – Olivia Chuang

Cesar Franck: Violin Sonata in A Major

- I. *Allegretto ben moderato*
- II. *Allegro*
- III. *Ben moderato: Recitativo-Fantasia*
- IV. *Allegretto poco mosso*

Maurice Ravel: Tzigane

Biography

Neville first started learning the violin at the age of 3 before joining the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (School of Young Talent) to study the piano. To date, he has obtained Associate and Licentiate Diplomas for both violin and piano from ABRSM and Trinity College London, and a Fellowship Diploma from the latter.

Neville's stint in the Singapore National Youth Orchestra has brought him abroad to cities such as Aberdeen and Berlin. Emerging as the winner in the 2014 SNYO Concerto Competition, he made his solo debut with the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto. He was also selected to participate in the 30th Toyota Youth Orchestra Camp in Tokyo where he collaborated with musicians of the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra.

Neville is presently furthering his graduate studies with Associate Professor Zuo Jun at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, where he earned his Bachelor of Music with full scholarship. His previous teachers include Chan Yoong Han and Igor Yuzefovich.

Earlier in 2018, an invitation was extended for him to lead the Jungli Youth Orchestra from Taoyuan City, Taiwan, for a performance in Korea at the KBS Hall. Other notable posts include orchestras such as Musicians Initiative, Yong Siew Toh Conservatory Orchestra and the Singapore International Festival of Music Orchestra.

In November 2021, Neville performed as a soloist with the ReSound Collective in the performance of Vivaldi's Concerto for 4 violins with support from the National Art's Council Self-Employed Person's Grant. This summer he will be attending the Aspen Music Festival and School.

As an active orchestral musician, Neville also performs with local orchestras such as the Metropolitan Festival Orchestra, ReSound Collective while also freelancing with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra.

Neville plays on a 1810 Valenzano, Johannes Maria on generous loan from the Rin Collection.

Franz Schubert: Rondo in A Major for Violin and Strings, D438

Franz Schubert was an entirely Viennese musical product, and in certain ways he grew to embody what the world embraced as the Viennese ideal in music, which tethered together exorbitant talent and technical facility with a measure of ineluctable charm. Of Schubert's talent there is no doubt. It is curious that his name rarely surfaces when music lovers speak of prodigies, for he undoubtedly qualifies as a prodigy composer, having begun to write music at an early age and having achieved undying masterpieces of art song by the time he was seventeen.

The little known and rarely played Rondo in A major for Violin and Strings, D.438 was written in June 1816. As Schubert had hardly any access to professional orchestras, he produced almost no concertos at all except the one so-called "Concertstück" for Violin and Orchestra, also in 1816. He also produced a Polonaise written for the same forces the following year. It's a pity, because those three concerted works display considerable ability in handling the sense of contrast that lies at the heart of concerto writing, an art Schubert had no practical reasons to explore further.

A rondo generally suggests lightness. Its recurring main section, with more or less contrasting episodes interspersed between its repetitions. He uses the simple layout of an Adagio introduction followed by a duple time Allegro rondo, but the melodic and harmonic touches are nonetheless distinctive.

Cesar Franck: Violin Sonata in A Major

- I. *Allegretto ben moderato*
- II. *Allegro*
- III. *Ben moderato: Recitativo-Fantasia*
- IV. *Allegretto poco mosso*

César or, to give him his full gloriously quintuple-barreled forename, César-Auguste-Jean Guillaume Hubert Franck, had his early career shaped by a combination of innate musical talent, and an overbearing father – a Walloon mine superintendent. His father exploited César's prodigious talent as a pianist, sending him and his violinist brother on well-paid concert tours at the expense of his education at the Paris Conservatoire. His early compositions were showy piano pieces written for such tours, but aged twenty he wrote four piano trios, which secured his reputation as a composer. However, for much of his life he was forced to earn his living quartering Paris as a piano teacher during the week and as a church organist at weekends. He was also a much-loved teacher of composition both individually and as professor of organ at the conservatoire. Most of his own composition was for organ and, less successfully, for choirs. He did not return to writing chamber music until his later years: the piano quintet in 1879, tonight's sonata in 1886 and the string quartet in 1889. These works are of his best and established a new era of French chamber music.

The Violin Sonata was written when Franck was 63, as a wedding present for the 31-years old Belgian virtuoso violinist and composer Eugène Ysaÿe. Franck presented the work to Ysaÿe on the morning of his wedding. After a hurried rehearsal, Ysaÿe performed the Sonata at the wedding. He gave the first public performance later that year at the Brussels Museum of Modern Painting. By the end of a long programme, the light was fading, and since the gallery authorities permitted no artificial light, the last three movements had to be played from memory in virtual darkness.

There is some evidence that the origins of the work lie in a sonata for cello; Franck certainly authorised a subsequent arrangement for cello. One characteristic of his style that can be seen in the sonata is his use of 'cyclic unity' where ideas from previous movements re-appear, perhaps modified, in later ones. The violin's opening theme of the gentle first movement provides a foundation for the whole work. The following *Allegro* is more like a conventional first movement, an energetically rising start contrasting with a falling second subject that mirrors the work's opening figure. The third movement is an original Recitative and Fantasy whose opening echoes that of the first movement and whose climax introduces both a theme which will recur in the last movement and another that provides a variant on the work's opening. Much of the final movement is written as a canon on a theme which is again related to the work's opening. The two parts of the canon are initially separated by a whole bar, but later move closer to just a half bar – a touching metaphor, along with the hint of wedding bells, for Ysaÿe's wedding.

Maurice Ravel: Tzigane

Ravel was born in a village near Saint-Jean-de-Luz, France, of a Swiss father and a Basque mother. His family background was an artistic and cultivated one, and the young Maurice received every encouragement from his father when his talent for music became apparent at an early age. In 1889, at 14, he entered the Paris Conservatoire, where he remained until 1905. During this period, he composed some of his best known works, including the Pavane for a Dead Princess, the Sonatine for piano, and the String Quartet.

Ravel's life was in the main uneventful. He never married, and, though he enjoyed the society of a few chosen friends, he lived the life of a semirecluse at his country retreat at Montfort-L'Amaury, in the forest of Rambouillet, near Paris. He served in World War I for a short time as a truck driver at the front, but the strain was too great for his fragile constitution, and he was discharged from the army in 1917. In 1928 Ravel embarked on a four months' tour of Canada and the United States and in the same year visited England to receive an honorary degree of doctor of music from Oxford. That year also saw the creation of Boléro in its original form as a ballet, with Ida Rubinstein in the principal role.

In 1922, Ravel heard Hungarian violinist Jelly D'Aranyi in recital. After the concert, she played Gypsy melodies at his request. Intrigued, he decided to pay homage both to her and her music in this fiery composition, Tzigane (the French word for a female gypsy). She gave the première of the original, violin-and-piano version in London during April 1924. Ravel created the even more colorful arrangement with orchestral accompaniment over the following summer. For almost the first half of the composition, the violinist plays alone, exploring just about every technique and figuration possible in the Hungarian Gypsy style in a freely rhapsodic fashion. One shouldn't really think of it as a series of authentic folk melodies, but rather a kaleidoscopic succession of ideas that sounds and feels like a long cadenza. Finally the accompaniment joins in, and right away we hear Ravel's concept. A series of wild dancing passages ensues, with Ravel's inimitable sparkling writing playing a perfect foil to the maniacal violin. Before you know it, its over – a charming salon piece that, as usual, is taken to a higher level by the ever-sophisticated Ravel. Truly Hungarian, it really is not. Rather, a distant look at the style through French eyes.