

Programme

Joelle Hsu, viola | Liu Jia, piano

George Frideric Handel
(arr. Toshio Hosokawa)

Lascia ch'io pianga

Henri Vieuxtemps

Capriccio for solo Viola

George Enescu

Konzertstück for Viola and
Piano

- Intermission -

Johannes Brahms

Sonata no. 1 in F minor

Krzysztof Penderecki

Candenza for solo Viola

About the Performer

Despite learning the piano and violin at a tender age, Joelle has decided to continue her journey with the viola upon resonating with the soulful voice of the instrument. Joelle is a current student of the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, studying under Associate Professor Zhang Manchin.

Joelle has developed as a soloist, debuting in 2018 alongside the Singapore National Youth Orchestra (SNYO) and winning Second Place in YST's Concerto Competition for Lower Strings in 2022. As the winner of the Goh Soon Tioe Centenary Award in 2019, Joelle performed a one-hour-long recital and continues to collaborate with prize-winners frequently in events and concerts.

Last summer, Joelle received a fellowship to attend the Aspen Music Festival and School where she collaborated with renown conductors and musicians. She was also recently invited to 'Kiyoko and Nobuko Workshop', studying closely under Nobuko Imai.

As an orchestral member, Joelle performs regularly with orchestras both within Singapore and internationally, freelancing regularly with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. Last year, Joelle was selected to attend the LEAD! project held in Sibelius Academy, and was given the opportunity to play as Principal Viola.

Programme Notes

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)
(arr. Toshio Hosokawa)

Lascia ch'io pianga (1709)

'Lascia ch'io pianga' or 'Let me weep' in English is an Italian aria taken from Handel's opera *Rinaldo*. It was written as a sorrowful plea from Almirena, who has just been taken prisoner by Argante, the Saracen King of Jerusalem, after he fell in love with her at first sight.

The melody has become a popular concert piece and has been orchestrated for various instrumentations for performances today.

Italian lyrics:

Lascia ch'io pianga
Mia cruda sorte,
E che sospiri
La libertà.

Il duolo infranga
Queste ritorte,
De' miei martiri
Sol per pietà.

English translation:

Let me weep
My cruel fate,
And that I
should have freedom.

The duel infringes
within these twisted places,
in my sufferings
I pray for mercy.

Henri Vieuxtemps (1820–1881)

Capriccio for Solo Viola (1845)

Vieuxtemps and Paganini were not only two of the greatest violinists, but also were virtuoso viola players. The *Capriccio* is the last in a set of six pieces written in Vieuxtemps' '*Hommage à Paganini*', where the first five pieces are written for solo violin.

The work starts off with a melancholic melody, and builds up to a virtuosic climax before reaching the final soft, plucked chords.

George Enescu (1881-1955)

Concertstück for Viola and Piano (1906)

George Enescu is one of the most prominent Romanian violinists and composers of the 20th, with his compositions reflecting his love for Romanian folk traditions.

The Concertstück for Viola and Piano was composed after being commissioned by the Paris Conservatoire president Gabriel Faure for an internal competition. Within the luscious melodies, the work displays virtuosic techniques to showcase the technical abilities of the violist.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Sonata no. 1 in F minor for Viola and Piano (1894)

I. Allegro appassionato

II. Andante un poco adagio

III. Allegretto grazioso

IV. Vivace

By 1890, Brahms had decided to retire from composing but this was short-lived as he was captivated by solo clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld's beautiful tone on a trip to Meiningen for an arts festival. This inspired Brahms to complete his two clarinet sonatas. Brahms also loved the rich, warm sound of the viola, and later transcribed the works for the viola.

The sonata is in four movements, with a progression from dark to light. The first movement, *allegro appassionato*, is tumultuous and dramatic. This is followed by an elegant nocturnal aria for the viola. The third movement shows similarities to a Ländler, which is music written for a slow Austrian waltz with stamping steps. The finale is bright and triumphant, a big contrast from how the sonata began.

Krzysztof Penderecki (1933-2020)

Cadenza for Solo Viola (1984)

Krzysztof Penderecki is the most significant Polish composer of his generation and one of the most inspired and influential musicians to emerge from Eastern Europe after World War II.

Penderecki composed the Cadenza for Solo Viola for a private music festival at his country estate in Lusławice. The piece begins quietly with a two-note sigh that is later expanded to a ferocious central passage of almost savage virtuosity. Energy spent, the hesitancy returns as the piece ends in the instrument's highest register.