

Programme notes for Junior Recital

Nikolaus von Krufft: Sonata for Horn and Fortepiano

Nikolaus von Krufft's Sonata for Horn and Piano in E Major is a charming and virtuosic work that showcases the full range of the French Horn's expressive capabilities. The sonata was composed in 1812, and was possibly written for Friedrich Bode, the principal horn player at Court Chapel in Mecklenburg-Schwerin, as Krufft later wrote a set of Variations for horn and piano for him.

The Sonata is in three movements:

I. Allegro moderato:

The first movement is a lively and engaging sonata-allegro form movement. The horn and piano trade off the main theme, which is both lyrical and playful. The development section is particularly impressive, with the horn displaying its technical brilliance in a series of challenging passages.

II. Andante espressivo:

The second movement is a slow and lyrical movement, with expressive and operatic melody that is shared by the horn and piano. The movement is in the key of A major, having a dreamlike quality, with the horn and piano creating a lush and atmospheric soundscape.

III. Rondo alla Polacca:

The third movement, back into the key of E major, is a lively and rondo-form movement with a main theme that is based on a Polish dance rhythm. The horn and piano engage in a playful dialogue throughout till the development section—featuring a contrasting theme in the minor mode, which provides a welcome contrast to the main theme. The sonata ends with a triumphant coda, and is a fitting conclusion to the sonata with its energetic and spirited mood.

Camille Saint-Saens: Romance for Horn and Piano op. 36

Saint-Saëns' Romance for Horn and Piano, Op. 36, is a beautiful and lyrical piece that is one of the most popular works in the horn repertoire. It was suspected that it was written in 1873 for the horn player Joseph-Désiré Dubois, and it was premiered by Dubois and Saint-Saëns himself at a concert in Paris on December 10, 1873.

The Romance is in a simple ternary form (ABA) in the key of F major, with a gentle and flowing main theme that is perfectly suited to the sound of the horn. The main theme is a gentle and flowing melody that is introduced by the horn and then accompanied by the piano. The piano accompaniment provides a gentle and supportive backdrop for the horn, and it also helps to create the mood and atmosphere of the piece. The middle section is more contrapuntal, with the horn and piano playing independent melodic lines. The main theme returns in the final section, and the piece ends with a quiet and peaceful cadence.

The Romance is a simple but elegant work that is full of charm and beauty. Although it is a relatively short piece lasting about five minutes, it is packed with rich music interests and emotion. This piece is a perfect example of Saint-Saëns' gift for melody and his understanding of the capabilities of the horn.

Programme notes written by Chloe Chai Mei Qin