



Cheryn's Senior Recital

Programme notes

J.S. Bach – Prelude and Fugue in F minor, BWV 857

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) was a German composer from the Baroque period, known for his deep and expressive music. The Well-Tempered Clavier is one of his most important works for keyboard—a set of 24 preludes and fugues in every major and minor key. It was written not only to explore a new tuning system that allowed all keys to sound good on one instrument, but also to show how much feeling and imagination could be expressed through structure and form.

This Prelude and Fugue in F minor stands out for its quiet sadness. The prelude flows with a steady stream of fast notes, but the slow-moving bass and long trills make it feel like the music is being held back. Even when it seems like it might brighten up, the heaviness returns almost immediately. It feels like the music is trying to move forward, but something is always pulling it down.

The fugue brings more motion and energy, but the mood doesn't really change. Bach uses nearly every note in the scale, almost as if the music is searching for a way out. Still, that sense of sorrow remains from beginning to end. Both movements feel connected by the same emotional weight—calm on the surface, but filled with quiet intensity underneath.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Sonata No. 7 in C Major, K. 309

Allegro con spirito – Andante un poco adagio – Rondo: Allegretto grazioso

In 1777, Mozart left his job in Salzburg, unhappy with his low pay and limited musical opportunities. He set off on a journey through several cities, including Augsburg, where he first improvised this sonata at the keyboard. He later wrote it down in Mannheim, where he taught piano to Rosa Cannabich, the daughter of the concertmaster. Mozart said the second movement was written as a musical portrait of Rosa graceful, kind, and gentle.

The first movement is bold and lively, starting with strong octaves followed by a softer, more lyrical idea. The music is full of energy and orchestral effects, likely inspired by the famous Mannheim orchestra.

The second movement is slower and more expressive, with a singing melody that reflects Rosa's character. It feels more intimate, and the gentle theme is developed through variation rather than contrast.

The final rondo is light and charming, full of playful touches and colourful textures. Though it's simpler than the first movement, it carries the same elegance and grace, ending the sonata with a warm, quiet finish.

Nikolai Kapustin – Prelude No. 1 in C major, Op. 53

Nikolai Kapustin (1937–2020) was a Ukrainian composer and pianist who combined classical form with jazz harmony, rhythm, and style. Though his music often sounds like jazz improvisation, it's fully written out—meticulously crafted, yet full of energy and spontaneity.

The first prelude in this set opens the collection with brightness and swing. Built around a steady walking bass line and syncopated chords, it feels like a cool, upbeat jam session at the piano. But beneath the jazzy surface lies a clear structure and clever voice-leading, showing Kapustin's deep knowledge of both jazz and classical traditions.

This piece sets the tone for the rest of the set stylish, rhythmically exciting, and full of life.

Franz Liszt – Tarantella from Venezia e Napoli, S.162 (1861)

Liszt's Tarantella is the final piece in Venezia e Napoli, a set of three works published as a supplement to his *Années de pèlerinage*: Italy. The music is based on lively Neapolitan dance tunes collected by Guillaume-Louis Cottreau, and Liszt transforms them into a powerful and exciting showpiece full of technical fireworks.

The piece begins at a very fast pace, jumping straight into the wild tarantella rhythm. Liszt cuts up and plays with the main melody, turning it into sparkling runs and sharp rhythms. He often switches between two-beat and three-beat patterns, adding to the feeling of excitement and unpredictability.

In the middle of the piece, the mood changes. A slower, more lyrical melody appears—this is a *canzona napoletana*, a type of Italian love song. The melody flows gently and is decorated with elegant, opera-like flourishes. But the calm doesn't last long. The music gradually builds up again with rippling runs and repeated notes that may remind listeners of the mandolin, a popular instrument in Naples.

The ending returns to the fast and fiery mood of the beginning—only now, even more intense. The piece races to the finish with dramatic flair, filling the piano with sound and ending in a dazzling display of virtuosity.

Levi Gunardi – The Dancer from Denting (2015)

Levi Gunardi is an Indonesian composer and pianist known for combining classical piano with elements of jazz and Indonesian musical storytelling. His piece *The Dancer*, from the album *Denting*, tells a gentle and inspiring story through music.

This piece follows the journey of a young girl who dreams of becoming a dancer. The music begins with a soft and playful character,

capturing the innocence and hope of childhood. As the piece grows, it reflects her determination and the challenges she faces along the way. The melodies become more expressive and graceful, just like her dancing. In the end, the music reaches a sense of joyful fulfillment—her dream has come true.

The Dancer is simple yet full of emotion, using melody, rhythm, and colour to paint the picture of someone chasing their passion with heart and perseverance.

Love,

Cheryn Pandora