

Ang Yi Xiang

Saxophone Recital



WED, 26 NOVEMBER 2025, 8:40PM

**YONG SIEW TOH CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC
CONSERVATORY CONCERT HALL**

Ang Yi Xiang, Saxophone

Jonathan Shin, Piano

Alfred Reed - Ballade

Paul Creston - Sonata, Op. 19

Jules Demersseman - Fantaisie sur un thème original

Toshio Mashima - Seagull

Alexander Glazunov - Concerto, Op. 109

Free
Admission

PROGRAMME

Alfred Reed

Ballade (5:00)

Paul Creston

Sonata for Eb Alto Saxophone and Piano, Op. 19
(14:00)

1. With vigor
2. With tranquility
3. With gaiety

Jules Demersseman

Fantaisie sur un thème original (6:30)

- Intermission (10 minutes)-

Toshio Mashima

Seagull (6:00)

Alexander Glazunov

Concerto in E-flat major, Op. 109 (14:00)

PROGRAMME NOTES

This recital traces a lyrical and historical journey of the alto saxophone: beginning with the intimate expressiveness of Alfred Reed's *Ballade*, the instrument first speaks in a warm, vocal-like tone. Paul Creston's *Sonata* then expands the palette with bold rhythmic energy and formal depth, before Jules Demersseman's *Fantaisie* brings us back to the saxophone's 19th-century origins in a display of operatic virtuosity. After the intermission, Toshio Mashima's *Seagull* shifts the atmosphere toward colour and imagination, evoking the natural world in a more modern, impressionistic language. The programme culminates in Alexander Glazunov's *Concerto*, the saxophone's great Romantic masterpiece, which gathers the threads of lyricism, agility, and orchestral intensity into a single sweeping arc. Together, these works highlight the saxophone's evolution, versatility, and expressive breadth across time and style.

Ballade (1979)

Alfred Reed

Alfred Reed's *Ballade* is one of the most lyrical gems in the saxophone repertoire. Written in a single, flowing movement, the work unfolds like a spoken monologue—intimate, reflective, and gently dramatic. Reed's trademark melodic writing is on full display: long, arching lines that allow the saxophone to sing with warmth and clarity.

The piece moves between quiet introspection and more impassioned gestures, supported by a piano part that oscillates between atmospheric colours and rhythmic independence. *Ballade* showcases the saxophone as a true lyrical voice, capable of nuance, breath-lines, and expressive depth.

Sonata for Eb Alto Saxophone and Piano, Op. 19 (1939)

Paul Creston

Paul Creston's *Sonata* is a cornerstone of the saxophone repertoire, written for the pioneering American saxophonist Cecil Leeson. Cast in three contrasting movements, the work exemplifies Creston's rhythmic vitality and melodic clarity.

The first movement, *With vigor*, is bold and energetic, driven by insistent rhythmic patterns and clear thematic ideas. The second movement, *With tranquility*, shifts into a lyrical and contemplative atmosphere, with long, chant-like lines over subtly shifting harmonies. The finale, *With gaiety*, bursts with dance-like momentum and playful syncopations, culminating in an exhilarating display of virtuosity. Throughout the sonata, Creston treats the saxophone and piano as equal partners, creating a dynamic and compelling musical dialogue.

PROGRAMME NOTES

Fantaisie sur un thème original (c. 1860s)

Jules Demersseman

Jules Demersseman, one of the earliest champions of Adolphe Sax's new instrument, composed this *Fantaisie* as a virtuosic showcase for the 19th-century saxophone. Modelled after the popular operatic fantasies of the era, the work begins with a dramatic introduction before unfolding into a lyrical, bel canto-inspired melody.

The piece soon accelerates into dazzling technical passages—rapid scales, ornamental runs, and fleet articulations—that highlight the agility and brilliance of the instrument. Equal parts charm and bravura, Demersseman's *Fantaisie* offers a glimpse into the saxophone's early expressive possibilities and the Romantic tradition from which it emerged.

Seagull (1991)

Toshio Mashima

Toshio Mashima's *Seagull* paints a vivid sonic portrait of a seabird gliding over the shoreline. The work opens with free, almost improvisatory gestures that evoke the cries and fluttering movements of a bird in flight. Gradually, the piano introduces shimmering harmonic textures, creating an impressionistic soundscape full of shifting light and colour.

As the piece unfolds, lyrical lines alternate with more animated passages, building to a climactic release before dissolving into a distant, airborne stillness. *Seagull* is both atmospheric and intimate, inviting listeners into a world where nature and imagination converge.

Concerto in E-flat major, Op. 109 (1934)

Alexander Glazunov

Composed in 1934 for the virtuoso Sigurd Raschèr, Glazunov's *Concerto* remains the most celebrated Romantic work for the alto saxophone. Although written in a single continuous movement, the concerto unfolds in distinct sections: a noble opening, a lyrical slow episode, a brief cadenza, and a brilliant fugato-driven finale.

Glazunov's writing showcases a deep understanding of the saxophone's lyrical and technical capabilities. The music combines expressive warmth with intricate passagework, culminating in a triumphant return to the opening material. The *Concerto* stands as a significant contribution to the instrument's repertoire, bridging late-Romantic richness with the emerging modern identity of the saxophone.

BIOGRAPHY

Ang Yi Xiang



Ang Yi Xiang (b. 1987) is a Singaporean saxophonist whose work spans classical performance, large-ensemble work, artistic programming, and youth music development. He holds a Licentiate Diploma in Saxophone Performance from Trinity College London and is currently pursuing the Master of Music at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music.

As an active performer, Yi Xiang has appeared with major ensembles including the Singapore Symphony Orchestra and The Philharmonic Winds. He has represented the region internationally as a member of the Southeast Asian Youth Orchestra & Wind Ensemble (2008) and the Asian Youth Orchestra (2009), and performed at the 2018 World Saxophone Congress in Croatia with the Xin Saxophone Quartet. A highlight of his work with the SAF Central Band includes performing Claude T. Smith's *Fantasia* under the baton of Maestro Tsung Yeh in 2018.

Beyond performance, Yi Xiang has extensive experience in musical direction and production. As former Chief Choreographer of the SAF Central Band, he created and staged numerous large-scale marching and display productions, including the National Day Parade (2015, 2016, 2024, 2025), the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo (2014), Basel Tattoo (Switzerland), and the Virginia International Tattoo (USA, 2017). He continues to contribute to Singapore's music ecosystem through artistic programming, creative project development, and mentorship of young musicians, particularly through his work with the National Youth Winds.

BIOGRAPHY

Jonathan Shin



Jonathan Shin (b. 1992) performs internationally as a soloist and chamber musician, as well as composes and improvises across multiple genres and styles. A prizewinner of Singaporean and international piano competitions, he was awarded top prizes across all age categories of the National Piano and Violin Competition. At 16, he made his concerto debut with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra with Franck's Symphonic Variations; the following year, Jonathan became the youngest winner of the concerto competition at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music. Eminent artists with whom Jonathan has worked with include John Perry, Cyprien Katsaris, Albert Tiu, Vladimir Viardo, Luis de Moura Castro, Eliso Virsaladze, and the late Mark Ray.

Jonathan began composing professionally at 24, starting with his song cycle for countertenor *The Other Merlion and Friends*, which was critically reviewed as “probably the most compelling and worthwhile new work from any Singaporean composer in recent years.” (The Straits Times)

During his graduate studies at the Longy School of Music, Jonathan won the concerto competition twice, as well as the orchestral composition competition; upon graduation he was conferred the Patricia Sherman Award and the Roman Totenburg Award. In October 2019, he was awarded the Emerging Artist Award by the St. Botolph Club, a Massachusetts-based foundation. In the same month, his 1819 Suite, commissioned for the Singapore Bicentennial, was reviewed to be “supremely confident and comfortable in its own skin.” (The Straits Times)

In November 2022, he was commissioned by the Esplanade to compose a large-scale choral symphony for their 20th anniversary celebration — the work was *Illuminations*, which was premiered by the Singapore Symphony Orchestra and the Singapore Symphony choral groups. His solo, chamber, and vocal works like *The Other Merlion and Friends*, *Lunarabesque*, and *Mad Dog Mancha* have taken flight and lives of their own overseas. In 2024, two of his operas *The Bright-Eyed Otter* and *Beacon (Phase 1)* premiered locally; the latter is in development towards a fully-staged evening-length opera by 2027 with The Opera People.

Jonathan has worked with many local and international ensembles ranging from instrumental outfits, orchestras, choral groups to dramatic companies, with the sole aim of uplifting his community with his experience and music. His recent work has also taken on a pedagogical dimension: Jonathan teaches ear-training and improvisation at YST; he also conducts improvisations workshops and coaches large-ensemble productions with institutions such as Kuo Chuan Presbyterian and Republic Polytechnic. Recently, he has been commissioned orchestral works by Esplanade for performances by youth orchestras in their annual March On series.

Jonathan holds a doctoral degree in classical composition under the tutelage of Kevin Puts, with a concentration on phenomenology and how perceptual time is experienced in opera. He is a founding member of Singapore-based multi-genre quintet, the Lorong Boys.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my teachers, collaborators, friends, and family for their guidance and support. Special thanks to Jonathan Shin for his artistry and partnership in this recital.

Thank You!