Junior Recitals: Viola & Double Bass

BAX
Sonata for viola and piano

I. Molto moderato – Allegro
II. Allegro energico e non troppo presto
III. Molto lento

CHEN SZU-HUA (B.MUS3) viola
LIU JIA piano

BACH
Cello Suite No. 1 in G major, BWV 1007

I. Prelude

BRAHMS
Sonata for viola and piano No. 2 in E-flat major, Op. 120, No. 2

I. Allegro amabile
II. Allegro appassionato
III. Andante con moto

HA YOUNJI (B.MUS3) viola
BEATRICE LIN piano
**BACH**

Largo in F major (from Sonata in C major, BWV 1005)

**BRAHMS**

Sonata for viola and piano No. 2 in E-flat major, Op. 120, No. 2

I. Allegro amabile
II. Allegro appassionato
III. Andante con moto

HO QIAN HUI (B.MUS3) *viola*
LIU JIA *piano*

**BARTÓK**

Viola Concerto

WEI JUN-TING (B.MUS3) *viola*
LIU JIA *piano*

**NEHER**

Serenade for solo bass

**SPERGNER**

Sonata in D major

I. Allegro moderato
II. Adagio
III. Rondo

DAHLIA DAYANA AHMAD NAZIR (B.MUS3) *double bass*
KERIM VERGAZOV *piano*
Programme Notes

Bax – Sonata for viola and piano

The Sonata for Viola and Piano is a three movements chamber work composed by Sir Arnold Edward Trevor Bax, an English composer. Although it is imbued with expressive chromatic harmonies, Bax's usual composing technique throughout the intensely beautiful Viola Sonata. This sonata brought Bax his first significant reputation as a composer in 1922.

The first movement starts with the lower range of the viola which accompanied by the twinkling piano that sounds above the viola line. The theme, which marked Molto moderato, repeats of a rising fourth followed by step and arises endlessly with variation and assimilate meter changes. The hesitant beginning grows this movement of introspective involvement infused with moment of passion. Among Bax's later works, this depressed technique is typical. The modal melody and dancing rhythms give the sonata an Irish flavor opening with the first theme.

Wild and brutish, the scherzo evokes a fast Irish dance for the second movement. In the middle of this movement, a calm section provides a contrast before the returning of the scherzo material and leads the music to a dramatica coda which built on opening theme.

Chromaticism is the character of the third movement, with its broad lyrical lines. The extremely slow movement of the sonata, the finale is a return of the opening idea of the first movement. Bax's idiom “chromatic harmony” support the two melodies Celtic and Elizabethan which charged the romanticism highly.

Programme notes by Chen Szu-Hua
Bach – Prelude from Cello Suite No. 1
Regarded as J. S. Bach’s *magnum opus*, Cello Suite No. 1, and especially the prelude, is perhaps the most widely appreciated composition of Bach if not all of classical music. The prelude flourishes in harmonic richness, teeming with the air of purity, unfettered joy and almost a religious zeal. Intended for an unaccompanied cello, the Suite has been rearranged for viola.

Brahms – Viola Sonata No. 2 in E-flat major
Hailed as one of the greatest composers of the Romantic period for his inexplicably captivating melodies, Johannes Brahms composed two viola sonatas during his reputed musical career. Published as Op. 120, the two sonatas were one of the last chamber works that Brahms composed before his death in 1897. They are lauded to date as one of his finest works. In contrast to the Sonata in F minor, the E-flat Sonata is much more light-hearted, almost nonchalant. It presents the audience with more lyrical and sweet melodies than the fiery F-minor Sonata. The E-flat Sonata is also less classically structured, venturing into a more liberated development of themes, with long demanding smooth legato bowing.

I. Allegro amabile
The first movement begins with a melody that welcomes the audience with a gentle greeting. The dotted *amabile* melody that forms the main theme is developed throughout the movement. This is later contrasted with a calmer section with triplets adding more movement, before a final *tranquillo* section to set the serene mood.

II. Allegro appassionato
In stark contrast to the first movement, the second movement is a lot more emotionally engaging and deeply passionate. In the gloomy minor key of E-flat minor, it first begins with the two appassionato sections that slowly build a solemn, victorious rising melody.

III. Andante con moto
*Slowly but with motion*, the third movement is an extended expression of the central theme, with added variations. Tehre is a rather ambiguous, even mysterious melody using falling and
rising thirds with a dotted upbeat. The movement concludes with a return to a calmer coda, ending with the last spark of brilliance in the home key of E-flat.

*Programme notes by Ha Younji*
**Bach – Largo in F major**

The Largo in F major by Bach is a direct transcription from his violin sonatas and partitas for unaccompanied violin. These works were composed in 1720 when he was Kapellmeister to Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen. They were however only published nearly a century later in 1817. The Largo is the third movement of the third sonata, and is accordingly lyrical. The typical form of the sonatas would be as follows: the 1st movement would be like a prelude, the 2nd a fugue, the third a slow lyrical movement and the 4th a fast movement in binary form.

**Brahms – Viola Sonata No. 2 in E-flat major**

Brahms viola sonata no. 1 and 2 were originally written for the clarinet in 1894 and were dedicated to Richard Muhlfeld, who Brahms also wrote a number of other famous clarinet works for. These sonatas were transcribed for the viola by Brahms himself and were some of the very last chamber works that Brahms wrote before his death in 1897. The E flat sonata starts with a very lyrical, warm and beautiful first movement. The second movement is passionate, with a chorale-like, pure middle section which then transitions back to the passionate return of the first section. The final movement starts with a simple folk-like theme, which is followed by six variations and a final strong and triumphant finish.

*Programme notes by Ho Qian Hui*
Bartók – Viola Concerto

Béla Bartók (25 March 1881- 26 September 1945) was born in a small town in the Kingdom of Hungary, Austria-Hungary. He is considered one of the most prominent composers of the 20th century, with his music having been profoundly influenced by the folk music of Hungary, Romania and other nations. Bartók had always resided in his hometown and grew attached to living there, but because of the worsening of the European political situation after the outbreak of World War II in 1940, he decided to flee Hungary and emigrated to the United States. Although he managed to obtain American citizenship in 1945, he however never felt fully at home in the United States.

Bartók began composing his Viola Concerto while living in New York in the summer of 1945. The piece was commissioned by William Primrose, a highly admired violist who was confident that Bartók could write a work that would challenge him. He told Bartók that he should not "feel in any way proscribed by the apparent technical limitations of the instrument". Bartók took up his challenge, however, it proved to be a more difficult task than expected as he was suffering from the terminal stages of leukemia. It remained unfinished at his death, and his close friend Tibor Serly finished it off for him in 1949. It was an arduous task for Serly, though. Even though the sketches of the work was already mostly finished by Bartók, there were still a few issues that Serly had to deal with. An example will be the lack of indication of instrumentation in certain sections of the concerto, which Serly had to rely on his own instinct and remarkable knowledge of Bartók’s style in order to complete the work. The concerto was finally premiered by Primrose as the soloist in December 1949 alongside the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra.

The concerto is written in three movements, although there is an attaca into each subsequent movement, thus making it seem like the concerto is an entire work on its own. The first movement is in sonata form, with the solo viola announcing the sorrowful first theme to set the concerto’s tragic mood. The first theme presents many sighing falling intervals in the viola, as though it is alluding to Bartók’s declining years. This theme keeps repeating, with each repeat sounding more and more intense and desperate. With a sudden outburst of energy in the solo viola, a sort-of recitative cadenza then leads into the next movement. The second movement starts off serene and prayer-like, depicting the picturesque hills and greenery of his hometown back in Hungary which he had greatly missed after emigrating to America. The peaceful music is however interrupted by sobs (Piangendo), and the mood of...
the music constantly fluctuates from this point onwards. This leads into a short Allegretto episode with harsh chords in the viola that then propels into the third movement. The closing movement opens with what it seems like a warped Hungarian dance folk music. The music is mostly aggressive, intense and insistent throughout. There is a temporary memory of a happy folk tune in the middle of the movement, before the viola quickly launches itself back into more runs of chromatic fast passages and octave chords. The viola and the accompaniment goes into a state of frenzy before the viola takes its final run to the top of its range and the music ends abruptly there, as if alluding to a sudden stroke of death.

Programme notes by Wei Jun-Ting
**Patrick Neher – Serenade for solo bass**

A passionate composer, well-known composer and multimedia specialist, Patrick Neher’s works have been premiered in Los Angeles and New York City. At the age of 15, he became the youngest professional bassist to perform with the Orchestra of Santa Fe. Presently, Neher is a part of the faculty of University of Arizona.

The piece *Serenade for Solo Bass* was composed for Carolyn Davis, during a music festival that Neher was attending in Mexico City. It was then premiered by Davis the following year in New York City. Neher had written the piece to be played as ‘dynamically and emotively free as possible, much like an improvisation.’

The piece has three very distinctive movements. The first movement, marked *Moderato*, has a very light and airy feel to it, despite the first note of the movement being the lowest note. The second movement, *Allegro con spirit*, is that of a march and has prominent dynamic changes. *Allegro moderato*, the third movement, is a very lyrical lullaby. Completely opposite of the first movement, this final movement is played entirely in the higher register of the double bass, with a brief touch of the lower register.

**J. M. Sperger – Sonata in D major**

Very little is known about Johannes Matthias Sperger. All that is known was that he was one of the most prominent figures in the history of double bass, next to Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf and Johann Baptist Vanhal, due to his contribution to the double bass solo repertoire which was at par with the works of the great Giovanni Bottesini or Domenico Dragonetti. Most of his life was greatly spent as a double bass player in many different orchestras, as a soloist and as an amazing composer. He composed 45 symphonies, 30 concertos for different instruments and countless chamber works.

The *Sonata in D major (T 40)* is one of the 3 Sonatas composed by Sperger. The Viennese tuning (also known as the Eighteenth-Century bass tuning), which is tuned in third and fourth, making double-stop playing possible; an uncommon thing to do at the time for bass players. Sperger takes advantage of the tuning and writes using arpeggios and passages in thirds. The first movement, *Allegro moderato*, is in a very straight forward sonata form. The second movement, *Adagio*, stands out the most, due to its aria-like melody and intricate
embellishments. The final movement, *Rondo*, is in a sonata rondo form. This final movement is very much upbeat and eccentric, compared to the previous movements.

_Programme notes by Dablia Nazir_