Senior Recital :
Chen Ying, Violin

J.S BACH

Violin Partita No.2 in D minor, BWV1004

V. Chaconne

PABLO DE SARASATE

Carmen Fantasy, Op.25

Intermission

JOHN CORIGLIANO

Sonata for Violin and Piano

I. Allegro

II. Andantino (with simplicity)

III. Lento (quasi recitativo)

IV. Allegro
Partita No. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1004 – Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
V: Chaconne

Written for solo violin, the Chaconne is one of the longest and most challenging entirely solo pieces ever composed for that instrument.

Historians speculate that Bach composed it between 1718 and 1720, after returning from a trip and found out that his wife -the mother of seven of his children, Maria Barbara had died.

Johannes Brahms, in a letter to Clara Schumann described the piece like this:

“On one stave, for a small instrument, the man writes a whole world of the deepest thoughts and most powerful feelings. If I imagined that I could have created, even conceived the piece, I am quite certain that the excess of excitement and earth-shattering experience would have driven me out of my mind. If one doesn’t have the greatest violinist around, then it is well the most beautiful pleasure to simply listen to its sound in one’s mind.”

One can go into the endless intricacies of Bach’s genius in this monumental work, but in the very end, it is the out-of-the-world experience which allows both performer and audience to live and journey through an entire lifetime within fifteen minutes to bear witness to the life of Bach’s beloved Maria.

The Concert Fantasy on themes from Bizet's Carmen, Op. 25
By Pablo de Sarasate (1844-1908)

Deemed a failure at its premiere in 1875, Georges Bizet's opera, Carmen, had catapulted to such unparalleled fame by the early 1880s that the great Spanish virtuoso violinist, Pablo de Sarasate decided to adapt his favorite themes from the opera and compiling them into a concert fantasy for violin and orchestra. A version for violin and piano was later published.

Universally known as the Carmen Fantasy, Sarasate’s adaptations of the five beloved themes from the opera, - Aragonaise, Habanera, Interlude, Seguidilla, and the Gypsy Dance, was so immaculately done that it became the definitive “Carmen Fantasy”, unlike its counterpart – also a “Carmen Fantasy” adapted by Waxman.

Considered to be one of the most technically and musically difficult pieces in the violin repertoire, the fantasy demands a very high level of artistry from the performer as amid the virtuosic “fireworks” and beyond the pomp and circumstance, the intricate details within the
John Paul Corigliano (1938-)

Sonata for Violin and Piano was composed during 1962-63, is primarily a romantic tonal composition, featuring momentary polytonal palettes and employs a variety of twentieth-century rhythmic/metric techniques while retaining a strong “American” flavor. The piece, seemingly conservative and melodic in style, also displays influences from his peers such as Leonard Bernstein and William Walton.

The Violin Sonata was originally entitled Duo, the piano part is equally as challenging in terms of musical and virtuosic demand as its violin counterpart. Complex hemiolic rhythms and meter changes happen in almost every bar, to the extent that the unusual combination creates a musically lyrical effect, which also interestingly results in a “meter-free” illusion of space-time perception.

Corigliano composed the Violin Sonata for his father, an accomplished violinist who served as concertmaster for 23 years at the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. Corigliano’s father had discouraged his son’s efforts at composition at every turn, refusing even to take a look at it, deeming Corigliano’s work as unworthy of his playing. Corigliano had to survive by working at radio stations so he could continue to work on this Sonata. It wasn’t until the piece won first prize in the 1964 Spoleto Festival Competition for Creative Arts and after performers across the globe had deemed the Violin Sonata worthwhile that Corigliano’s father finally relented by perform the piece in a concert in New York City in 1966.