Tzu-Yi Chen
陳孜怡
PIANO

MOZART
Nine Variations on a Minuet
by J. P. Duport, K. 573

BRAHMS
Variations and Fugue on a Theme
by Handel, Op. 24

LAN-IN WINNIE YANG
Suite Astrologique for Piano

MUSSORGSKY
Pictures at an Exhibition

Saturday, October 11, 2014
8:00 PM

Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall
881 Seventh Ave, New York, NY 10019
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Distinguished Concerts International New York (DCINY)

Iris Derke, Co-Founder and General Director
Jonathan Griffith, Co-Founder and Artistic Director

*Presents*

DISTINGUISHED CONCERTS ARTIST SERIES

*Tzu-Yi Chen*

陳孜怡

PIANO
Program

Nine Variations on a Minuet
by Duport, K.573

Variations and Fugue on a Theme
by Handel in B-flat Major, Op. 24

Intermission

Suite Astrologique for Piano
I. Virgo – careful, minute
II. Aries – challenging, impulsive
III. Cancer – caring, sensitive
IV. Sagittarius – energetic, impatient
V. Aquarius – free-thinking, original
VI. Libra – balance, justice
VII. Gemini – clever, playful
VIII. Capricorn – ambitious, decisive
IX. Scorpio – intense, passionate
X. Pisces – sentimental, romantic
XI. Leo – dominant, proud
XII. Taurus – stubborn, conservative

Pictures at an Exhibition
Promenade
Gnome
Promenade
The Old Castle
Promenade
Tuileries
The Oxcart
Promenade
Ballet of the Chicks in their Shells
Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle
Promenade
The Marketplace in Liminged
Catacombs: Con Mortuis in Lingua Mortua
The Hut on Fowl’s Legs (Baba Yaga)
The Great Gate of Kiev
Program Notes

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)  
Nine Variations on a Minuet by Duport, K.573

Nine Variations on a Minuet by Duport, K.573, was written in 1789 during one of Mozart’s longest adulthood periods of travel. This was a difficult period of Mozart’s career and personal life: without a full time position, he was receiving minimal income from his concerts, compositions and operas. Moreover, this journey was the first trip that Mozart undertook following his marriage with Constanze in 1782—an alliance that was strictly against the will of his father.

On April 23, 1789, Mozart travelled from Leipzig to Potsdam in order to pursue employment in the court of King Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia. Friedrich Wilhelm referred Mozart to Jean-Pierre Duport, the cellist and the director of the Royal chamber music. Mozart, eager to gain favor with Duport, composed a set of nine piano variations on one of Duport’s own themes. These nine variations with coda explore Mozart’s endless capacity for imaginative ornamentation.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)  
Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel in B-flat Major, Op. 24

Brahms’ Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel in B-flat Major, Op. 24 is based on a theme from Handel’s Harpsichord Suite No. 1 in B-flat major, HWV 434, and has been considered the “climax of the young Brahms.” Op. 24 consists of a theme, 25 variations, and a fugue.

These variations, dedicated to Clara Schumann, were composed in 1861. In the words of Brahms’ biographer Jan Swafford, the Handel Variations are “perhaps the finest set of piano variations since Beethoven. . . . Besides a masterful unfolding of ideas concluding with an exuberant fugue with a finish designed to bring down the house, the work is quintessentially Brahms in other ways: the filler of traditional forms with fresh energy and imagination; the historical eclectic able to start off with a gallant little tune of Handel’s, Baroque ornaments and all, and integrate it seamlessly into his own voice, in a work of massive scope and dazzling variety.”

The 28-year old Brahms was still perfecting his mastery of the piano when he wrote Op. 24. He played these variations in public on occasion, and Op. 24 was the first piece that he played in the presence of Richard Wagner. Wagner—known for his modern tonal functionality—was impressed enough to tell Brahms that Op. 24 was a good example of the innovation that could still be gleaned from traditional forms.

Brahms cast the Variations in unusual guises: Variation No. 6 is a Baroque canon; No. 13 has the Hungarian flavor that appears frequently in Brahms’ music;
and No. 19 has the lilt of an Italian siciliano. The subject of the concluding fugue derives from the main theme and brings the work to a brilliant close.

Lan-In Winnie Yang (b. 1980)

*Suite Astrologique* for Piano

*Suite Astrologique* for Piano (2009) consists of twelve miniatures; each piece is a musical portrait of the characteristics of one of the zodiac signs in Western astrology. They are ordered according to how they best flow musically.

*Virgo* uses contrapuntal writing in its texture and goes *attacca* (follows immediately) to the *Aries* movement, in which a new melody emerges and accelerates to a fast and impulsive tempo. *Cancer* indulges in the style of Chopin’s nocturnes. The long, lyrical, and improvisatory melody is supported by a simple accompaniment figure in the bass, with occasional irregular or added rhythmic patterns. *Sagittarius* is a fast waltz, with duple measures occasionally breaking up the triple meter. The *Aquarius* movement is based on one simple motive: continuous eighth notes throughout, moving between mechanical staccato and lyrical legato articulations. *Libra* is a multi-tonal waltz, in which a B-major melody comes back three times, each time harmonized in different keys: the first time in C-major, then in A-major, and lastly in a D dominant-seventh chord. *Gemini* is based on a twelve-tone row, with techniques that capture the cunning and intellectual characteristics of the *Gemini*, while the *Capricorn* movement is an étude in thirds in perpetual motion. *Scorpio* shows complexity in its intense rhythm and is full of chromaticism, driven by emotion. It goes without a break into *Pisces*, an imaginative movement, in which two contrasting materials represent reality and fantasy, withdrawn from the real world. *Leo* goes without a break to the final movement, *Taurus*, which acts also as a postlude – four measures of ostinato chords in the right hand give a steady and unchanging pulse while the left hand sings a long and lyrical melody underneath. The whole movement is played *pianissimo* (very soft).

Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881)

*Pictures at an Exhibition*

With *Pictures at an Exhibition*, Mussorgsky represents an eclectic collection of ten drawings, sketches, and water colors produced by his recently deceased friend, artist and architect Victor Hartmann.

*Pictures at an Exhibition* is often said to be Mussorgsky’s self-portrait: Mussorgsky imagined himself making his way down the hallway examining Hartmann’s exhibition. Each movement of the piece depicts every-day characters and scenes showcased in each painting. From the twisted legs of the “Gnome,” to the “Oxcart” trudging through the mud, to Hartmann’s own portrait of himself.
surveying the “Catacombs,” Mussorgsky’s colorful tonalities and gestures paint musical images of the movement titles. The Promenade theme, interspersed throughout the ten movements, symbolizes both the reflection of the previous piece of artwork and the gaze ahead to the next piece. As the work progresses, he becomes more immersed in the continuous psychological experience of moving from one state of mind to the next.

About the Artist

Tzu-Yi Chen

At the age of three, Tzu-yi Chen idolized her five-year-old brother. She wanted everything he had and even studied his first-grade textbooks. She insisted on sitting with him during his piano lessons instead of waiting with her mother. The teacher observed this quiet, attentive, toddler who showed an uncanny understanding, and soon enrolled her in private study. Tzu-yi said, “I was overtaken by the music.”

In 2006, Tzu-yi Chen joined the ranks of some of history’s greatest musicians, receiving the Premier Prix upon graduation from the Paris Conservatory. Before relocating to the Washington D.C. area, she studied with Van Cliburn gold medalist Alexander Kobrin at Columbus State University’s Schwob School of Music in Columbus, Georgia.

After graduation, Tzu-yi founded the International Friendship Ministries’ Arts Academy to teach children and youth, drawing out of them the same things she discovered as a child. Though she grew up in Taipei, Tzu-yi’s parents were from a more rural and traditional part of the country, and raised her with those values. The friendly people and welcoming atmosphere of the Deep South reminded her of home.

Tzu-yi studied Ravel with the Parisian masters, Beethoven at the National Karlsruhe Music University in Germany, and Rachmaninoff from the Russian Kobrin. She believes that the best way to approach a piece of music is to understand the culture, the folklore and the language of its composer.

She won the International Piano Competition of Mauro Paolo Monopoli in Italy, and the Scholarship Competition of the Pro-Mozart Society of Atlanta, and Scholarship Competition of Atlanta Music Club. Among others, she placed at the Darmstadt International Chopin Competition, the International Chopin Competition in Taipei, the International Gina-Bachauer Piano Competition for young artists in USA and the International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition for young artists in Russia.

A citizen of the world, Tzu-yi has been based in the D.C. area since summer 2014. She performs internationally, teaches piano at the Levine School of Music, and serves on the music staff at Taiwanese Presbyterian Church.
DISTINGUISHED CONCERTS INTERNATIONAL NEW YORK

Founded by Iris Derke (General Director) and Jonathan Griffith (Artistic Director and Principal Conductor) Distinguished Concerts International New York is driven by passion, innovative vision, a total belief in its artists, and an unwavering commitment to bringing forth unforgettable audience experiences. DCINY is a creative producing entity with unmatched integrity as a talent incubator, a star-maker, and a presenter of broadly accessible, world-class musical entertainment. For more information about Distinguished Concerts International New York and upcoming DCINY musical events around the world, please visit: www.DCINY.org.

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Sunday, November 9, 2014 at 8:00 PM
Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center

I Believe... Remembering the Holocaust

Jonathan Griffith, DCINY Artistic Director and Principal Conductor
Zane Zalis, Visiting Composer
Zalis: I Believe (US Premiere)

Donald McCullough, Composer/Conductor
McCullough: In the Shadow of the Holocaust (NY Premiere)

Featuring Distinguished Concerts Orchestra and Distinguished Concerts Singers International

Friday, November 21, 2014 at 7:00 PM
Stern Auditorium/Perelman Stage, Carnegie Hall

Carmina amoris: Songs of Love

Steven Sametz, Composer/Conductor
Sametz: Carmina amoris (NY Premiere)

Featuring the renowned Lehigh Choral Arts. The performance features Sametz's I Have Had Singing and the choral symphony Carmina amoris, which sets medieval texts to music.

With the Lehigh Choral Union, University Choir, Dolce, and the historic Glee Club,

Saturday, November 29, 2014 at 7:00 PM
Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center

With Grace: The Music of Gwyneth Walker

Nancy Menk, Guest Conductor
Gwyneth Walker, Composer-in-Residence

Featuring Distinguished Concerts Orchestra and Distinguished Concerts Singers International

SoliHarmoniums - NY's Own Women's Choir
Elizabeth Nunez, Director

Sunday, November 30, 2014 at 2:00 PM
Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center

Messiah...Refreshed!

Thomas Beecham/Eugene Goossens’ 1959 Re-Orchestration of Handel’s Messiah

Jonathan Griffith, DCINY Artistic Director and Principal Conductor

Featuring Distinguished Concerts Orchestra and Distinguished Concerts Singers International

Special appearance by Santa Claus!

Dates, performers, and artists subject to change.

For a full 2014-15 listing and ticket details, please visit www.DCINY.org

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