A CONCERT FEATURING WORKS OF SINGAPORE COMPOSERS

P.R.S.
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A P.R.S MUSIC FUND PROJECT

现场录音
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AT VICTORIA CONCERT HALL

CONDUCTOR: LIM YAU
THE NEW MUSIC FORUM ENSEMBLE
Dr Bernard Tan Tiang Ge was born in Singapore in 1943 and studied piano with Arthur Tan How Teck, Lee See Kow, Lin Kwee Eng, Benjamin Koo and Douglas Tan. He was Acting Head of the Department of Music at the University of Singapore in 1977 – 1978 and is currently Associate Director of the Centre for Musical Activities at the National University of Singapore. His works include "My Country and My People", a setting of Lee Tzu Pheng's poem for mixed chorus and piano, the incidental music for Robert Yeo's play "One Year Back Home" written for clarinet and piano, "Sinfonietta" for strong orchestra, written for the Asian Composers' League Conference in Singapore in 1983, "O for a thousand tongues to sing," a setting of Charles Wesley's hymn commissioned by the United Methodist Choir to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Methodist Church in Singapore in 1986, "Little Things", a setting of Geraldo Heng's poem for mixed chorus and piano, commissioned by the Methodist Boys' Choir, the music for the ballet "Conflicts" based on Garcia Lorca's "The House of Bernarda Alba", choreographed by Anthony Then and performed by the National Dance Company (Ballet Gita) at the Singapore Arts Festival 1986, "Movement for Viola and Piano" written for Jin Heeger, principal violist of the Singapore Symphony Orchestra and premiered by him in 1986 and "Sinfonietta No 2" commissioned by the Performing Rights Society and premiered in 1987 with Lim Yau conducting.

Born in Singapore in 1965, Yenn Chwen began to learn the violin and piano at the age of six under Chan Ying Shing and Wok Pek Chian respectively. He studied composition under Lee Teck Fan. Under Lee Teck Fan's guidance, he won the Best Award and Outstanding Performance Award in the Second Singapore Junior Original Concert (1979) with "Night Song" a work for violin and piano. Yenn Chwen continued his studies in the Royal Academy of Music, London, when he was awarded a SSO scholarship. It was then he was exposed to 20th century music and began to compose under the guidance of Sarah Thomas. Several works were written during these years, including a sonata for violin and piano, the violin suite and some other shorter works.

Since his return, Yenn Chwen started to compose choral music. His cantata "An Unknown Evangelist" and a shorter work, "Psalm 150" were performed by his church choir (Orchard Road Presbyterian Church) at the Victoria Concert Hall in August 1986.

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This work was written in May/June 1988 at the request of Chong Shou Mei, trombonist with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Chong wanted a suitable piece to play at a Trombone Workshop in Australia earlier this year. Only one movement of the work was performed in Australia so this is the premiere of the complete work.

The Sonatina is as three short movements and is written in a direct and easily accessible style. The first movement is a rondo tropo, is a strongly and cheerful sonata form with a brief development. There are two contrasting themes, the poignant principal theme heard at the beginning and a more lyrical, wide ranging second subject over a syncopated piano accompaniment. The short coda ends with the rhythm of the theme gently fading out. The second movement, somewhat tranquil, has been adapted from an intense, passionate and the composer's music for the ballet "Conflict" choreographed by Anthony Then and presented by the National Dance Company (Ireland) group in the 1966 Festival of Arts. The third movement, marked allegro spirito is highly spirited and energetic and lastly gives the trombone and piano any respect demanding from both players a bravura performance which culminates in a forceful ending.

INTERFUSION (FOR PIANO QUINTET)

LEONG YOON PIN

"Interfusion" is written for a quintet of piano, violin, viola, cello and double bass. Structurally it is based on four chromatic materials: namely, a tonal serial broken up into different segments and developed, a freely conceived pentacord interval, followed by two harmonies derived from the original row with ornate decorations for each section on its construction and, in conclusion, a minimalized treatment on four groups of tones derived from the opening.

VARIATIONS FOR CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

TSAO CHIEN

The Variations for Chamber Ensemble were written between May and September 1986. It was originally conceived as a sort of chamber concerto where each instrument in the ensemble would be given a cadenza-like passage to play in a manner reminiscent of Big Band jazz where the principal in each instrumental group would improvisation display his prowess at his instrument in turn. The single movement work, however, was too short to be called a concerto and names like "obligato" and "soloques" for chamber ensemble, all of which reflect the soloistic aspects of the work's conception and reached. I eventually settled for the present title because the work can be construed as a set of continuous variations.

The work itself, however, sounds nothing like Big Band jazz and is instead presented by it in outward form. Indeed, it is very loosely based on a tone-row announced by the flute in the second phrase of its opening solo, the first four notes of which form a motif of some importance. A climax is reached and a coda for solo follows. Other instruments gradually join in as the cello reminiscences in its extreme high register above the treble staff. Mysterious melismata appear in the winds and these give way to a version for string quartet of the celio's melancholy song. An extended variation with cor anglais obligato follows. This struts towards a climax but eventually subsides in a frustrated duo for cello and cor anglais accompanied by slow, repeated C's on the chimes. As the cor anglais in the strings leads to an improvised heterophony of pentatonic bed-calls on flute, clarinet and violin. This texture is maintained as the horn makes a dramatic entrance with a version of the flute's opening solo, punctuated by dissonant chords on chimes, piano, harp and strings. The obligato becomes increasingly more complex and virtuosic and eventually reaches a climax over spasmodic entries in the percussion.

The trumpet now takes the stage along with the horn and trombone in a passage of rapid triple-tonguing accompanied by side-drum and convulsive interjections from strings and piano. This leads to a chordal variation for flutes and woodwind with timpani obligato. Here, the timpani are made to play a variant of the underlying tone-row, ending in pulsating fortissimo chords for the whole ensemble which soon disintegrate in a catharsis of controlled improvisation. The music dies away and the opening flute solo returns over an inverted pedal A, pianissimo in the harp and violins punctuated by disturbing piano outbursts and woodwind going entries. The bass clarinet has the last word as the music fades away into silence.

Some unorthodox instrumental effects are also used in the piece, notably the water gongs, pitch bending in the flute and various inside the piano effects.

The Ensemble of the New Music Forum II

Conductor: LIM YAU

The Ensemble of the New Music Forum II

Harp

Clarinet

Oboe

Bassoon

Horn

Trumpet

Tenor Saxophone

Flute

Double Bass

Violin

Viola

Cello

Adaleine Teo

Zhang Jin Min

Yuko Hinokawa

Shane Thio

Lim Meng Ken

Chong Shoo Mei

Josst Flach

Karen Yeo

Lim Soon Lee

Seow Jin Chong

Oswin Chee Mei

Lin Soon

Zhou Yu Er

Karen Yeo

Lee Chun

Jesse Place

Vincent Goh

Chong Jin Mei

Kadlene Teo

Pak Sin Chiong

Chong Shoo Mei

Lim Meng Kei

Shane Thee

Takeo Hikosaka

Voln

Voln

Voln

Voila

Cello

Double Bass

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet

Bassoon

Horn

Trumpet

Percussion

Piano/Celesta

Harp

All Rights Reserved, National Library Board, Singapore
Sonatina for Trombone and Piano. by Dr. Bernard Tan (10' 25'')
Obsession by Er Yenn Chween (12' 24'')
Interfussion by Leong Yoon Pin (11' 23'')

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Variations for Chamber Ensemble by Tsao Chieh (15' 06")
Variants on "Kuan Shan Yue" by Phoon Yew Tian (9' 08")

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