



Krystian ZIMERMAN Piano Recital

2024.11.23 Sat. 19:30

2024.11.24 Sun. 14:30

Weiwuying Concert Hall

Duration is 120 minutes with a 20 minute intermission.



National Kaohsiung
CENTER FOR THE ARTS

WEI WUYING

衛武營 國家藝術文化中心
國家表演藝術中心 National Performing Arts Center

Program

11/23

F. CHOPIN: Nocturne No. 2 in E-Flat Major, Op. 9-2

F. CHOPIN: Nocturne No. 5 in F-Sharp Major, Op. 15-2

F. CHOPIN: Nocturne No. 16 in E-flat Major, Op. 55-2

F. CHOPIN: Nocturne No. 18 in E Major, Op. 62-2

F. CHOPIN: Piano Sonata No. 2 in b-flat minor, Op. 35

----- - Intermission - -----

C. DEBUSSY: *Estampes*, L. 100

Karol SZYMANOWSKI: Variations on a Polish Folk Theme, Op. 10

11/24

J. S. BACH: Partita No. 2 in c minor, BWV 826

F. CHOPIN: Sonata No. 3 in b minor, Op. 58

----- - Intermission - -----

C. DEBUSSY: *Estampes*, L. 100

Karol SZYMANOWSKI: Variations on a Polish Folk Theme, Op. 10

Program Notes

F. CHOPIN: Four Nocturnes

- Nocturne No. 2 in E-Flat Major, Op. 9-2
- Nocturne No. 5 in F-Sharp Major, Op. 15-2
- Nocturne No. 16 in E-flat Major, Op. 55-2
- Nocturne No. 18 in E Major, Op. 62-2

In CHOPIN's body of work, the genres that best reflect the stages of his compositional journey are the mazurkas and nocturnes, spanning over twenty years of his life. The mazurkas capture his inner world, the ascended dance, and the Polish spirit, while the nocturnes convey heartfelt expressions that emphasize touch, pedaling, and lyrical quality, highlighting CHOPIN's constant pursuit of tone, melody, ornamentation, and sound control.

His Nocturnes, Op. 9 are often seen as defining the "Chopin-esque" nocturne style, with No. 2 being particularly beloved for its timeless, iconic melody. CHOPIN transforms the right hand into a soprano voice, expressing a beautiful melody while performing intricate coloraturas. Another famous piece, Nocturne Op. 15, No. 2, diverges entirely in style, opening with a flowery theme filled with nuanced intervals and chromatic arrangements. Transitioning from vocal-style to piano-specific ornamentation, it reveals another possibility of contrast through color and sound.

The Nocturnes, Op. 55, written in 1843, embody the spirit of improvisation, with the second nocturne's unpredictable melody continuously surprising the listener. CHOPIN displays his skillful counterpoint and harmonic shifts, as each voice moves independently yet interweaves, creating an ineffable marvel. His final nocturne set, Op. 62, composed between 1845 and 1846, exemplifies his late style, featuring lines of intellectual counterpoint and harmonic playfulness. In the second nocturne, the main theme appears and is immediately repeated three times, with each iteration incorporating previous material, demonstrating a profound internal musical logic. The polyphonic lines, especially in the middle section, carry enchanting deep yet nonchalant emotional shifts.

F. CHOPIN: Piano Sonata No. 2 in b-flat minor, Op. 35

- I. Grave – Doppio movimento
- II. Scherzo
- III. Marche funèbre: Lento
- IV. Finale: Presto

This piece is known as the “Funeral March” due to its third movement, and the entire sonata develops its other movements around the material from this section. Many scholars have analyzed the sonata, noting that all four movements are not only enveloped in a dark, eerie atmosphere but are also interconnected through hidden thematic relationships. These include CHOPIN’s use of recurring motifs and figures, developed through inversion and retrograde techniques. The structure is unusual: although the first movement follows the sonata form, the recapitulation does not restate the first theme, which only briefly returns at the end of the development as a hint. The movement concludes with a dramatic shift from B-flat minor to B-flat major, unresolved harmonic conflicts, and galloping left-hand octaves leading to a tragic conclusion.

The second movement continues the unfinished musical thought of the first, starting with powerful octaves and crescendos. Pianist FOU Ts’ong analyzed this movement as a mazurka: “Musically, the first movement already ends with a grand tragic conclusion, a ‘mutual destruction’ that essentially ends the music. But the second movement, with its mazurka representing the Polish homeland, embodies the Polish spirit—uncompromising, continuing to resist even after devastation.”

The crucial third movement features tolling bells in the left hand, while the dotted rhythms in the right resemble a funeral pace. After a tender, nostalgic middle section, CHOPIN brings back the funeral march, making the middle part a surreal psychological depiction, akin to a director changing camera angles. The brief, rapid fourth movement evokes ghostly will-o’-the-wisps and cold winds in a cemetery, with ambiguous tonality and structure and a daring pedal technique. This sonata’s conception far surpasses CHOPIN’s era, standing as an unforgettable milestone in music history.

C. DEBUSSY: *Estampes*, L. 100

- I. Pagodes
- II. La soirée dans Grenade
- III. Jardins sous la pluie

Starting with his *Pour le Piano* suite completed in 1901, DEBUSSY developed new musical vocabularies. His *Estampes*, completed in 1903 and published the following year, represents a fully matured example of the innovative approach. Each of the three movements in *Estampes* carries an evocative title, guiding listeners on an imaginative journey through time and space.

'Pagodes' features distinct Eastern scales and timbres, reflecting DEBUSSY's exposure to Indonesian gamelan music at the Paris World Exposition. This movement showcases sound layers with shifting shadows and spatial depth, creating an immersive auditory experience. 'La soirée dans Grenade' portrays the Andalusian city of Granada, known for its blend of Islamic and Catholic influences, and the interwoven lives of Spaniards and Gypsies. DEBUSSY incorporates Arabic scales, Habanera rhythms, and guitar-like effects on the piano, capturing a captivating Spanish-Middle Eastern atmosphere.

K. SZYMANOWSKI: Variations on a Polish Folk Theme, Op. 10

SZYMANOWSKI was a leading Polish composer of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He crafted a unique musical vocabulary by blending diverse influences from German-Austrian traditions, Russian folk music, and DEBUSSY's harmonic innovations, incorporating elements of Polish music and Oriental studies. His compositions are distinguished by their highly organized structure and meticulous design. A skilled pianist, he developed an expressive style for the instrument, with *Variations on a Polish Folk Theme* as a prime example. He composed this piece at age 22, revealing a profound influence from CHOPIN and SCRIABIN.

The piece opens with a brief prelude, followed by the main theme stated in octaves. Even in just these two sections, SZYMANOWSKI's emerging personal style is evident. This leads into ten tightly connected variations, with the first nine variations using different ternary forms. The first five form a cohesive section, with the sixth modulating from B minor to a sweet B major, and the seventh incorporating rhythmic play that challenges the pianist with intricate hand coordination. The eighth variation, a funeral march in G minor, transitions into a wave-like ninth, building toward a grand, expansive tenth variation. This finale highlights some of SZYMANOWSKI's remarkable creative moments, marked by striking dynamic contrasts, rich and expansive soundscapes, enigmatic and passionate trills, and a fugue played with "humor," concluding in a heroic and virtuosic coda—a self-contained world of its own. In this concert, we have the opportunity to hear ZIMMERMANN's meticulous refinement of this piece over more than thirty years, offering perhaps the most profound interpretation possible. We invite you to listen attentively.

J. S. BACH: Partita No. 2 in c minor, BWV 826

- I. Sinfonia
- II. Allemande
- III. Courante
- IV. Sarabande
- V. Rondeau
- VI. Capriccio

On November 1, 1726, the Leipzig newspaper announced BACH's new work, *Clavier-Übung I*, featuring the first Partita, which became the prelude to a series of six Partitas. At this time, BACH held a stable position and enjoyed great renown in Leipzig. Through these works, he showcased his confidence as both a composer and performer. The term "Partita" originates from the Italian word for "variation," and by the 17th century, it had come to mean "suite." Studies indicate that BACH's use of the term aligned with Leipzig's musical tradition. The Italian-style suite is a collection of dances, but BACH's Partitas not only embody Italian style but also incorporate elements from various musical traditions. Typically beginning with a prelude, the suites continue with dance movements such as the Germanic Allemande, French Courante, Spanish Saraband, and English Jig, alongside pieces like Capriccio and Rondeaux, forming an enchanting and delightful musical anthology.

The c minor Partita, composed in 1727, leans structurally toward French orchestral or ballet suites. The opening movement reflects the style of a Jean-Baptiste LULLY opera overture, beginning with a solemn atmosphere that transitions into an andante section before concluding with an allegro. The suite unfolds in the traditional sequence of Allemande, Courante, and Sarabande, characterized by a light and flowing style, with the Sarabande offering a lingering, contemplative feel. A lively Rondeaux follows, sparking excitement and leading into the final Capriccio, which bursts with brilliant virtuosity like fireworks. The piece opens with grandeur but exudes dynamic energy, standing as one of BACH's most beloved works and a testament to his masterful composition and boundless creativity.

F. CHOPIN: Sonata No. 3 in b minor, Op. 58

- I. Allegro maestoso
- II. Scherzo: Molto vivace
- III. Largo
- IV. Finale: Presto non tanto

CHOPIN began composing Piano Sonata No. 3 in the summer of 1844 and published it the following year. While it follows a four-movement structure like his second, it differs greatly in character. The piece features a clear symmetrical structure, with the first and last movements in sonata form and the second and third movements in ternary form. The contrapuntal techniques in this piece are more sophisticated, applying approaches such as prime form, inversion, and canon to the motifs, with refined harmonic and rhythmic design lending cohesiveness to the materials. Unlike the mysterious and enigmatic second sonata, the third, though in a minor key, is marked by bright themes and grand momentum, with both the first and last movements ending in a major key.

The piece captures a sense of rational beauty and lyrical tenderness, while exploring psychological depth through its key changes. For instance, CHOPIN introduces the second theme in the first movement in a minor key, then after several twists shifts to a major key. The complex melodic lines simplify into song-like passages with accompaniment, bringing clarity to the harmony and texture. The second movement's outer sections demand agile fingerwork, while the ambiguous-toned middle section hints at the forte rhythms of the finale, highlighting a strong structural link. The third movement's prelude feels like the opening of a gate to the underworld, followed by a nocturne-like melody and a heart-wrenchingly beautiful aria, with the tonality drifting in shadowy, dreamlike hues. The fourth movement features masterfully crafted counterpoint and heroic virtuosic passages, producing a power and volume rare in CHOPIN's oeuvre, with a dazzling finale. Each movement of this sonata represents reason, uncertainty, deep emotion, and brilliance, displaying grand scale and rich content. It is another testament to CHOPIN's extraordinary talent and exceptional determination.

About the Artist

Krystian ZIMERMAN



Krystian ZIMERMAN came to fame when he was awarded First Prize in the Chopin Competition at the age of 18. He has since enjoyed a world-class career working with the world's most prestigious orchestras and giving recitals in the top international concert halls.

Born into a family with a music-making tradition, musicians met almost daily in ZIMERMAN's home to play chamber music, and this experience afforded him an intimate, natural, everyday contact with live music. He took his first steps in music under his father's supervision and, aged seven, began working formally with Andrzej JASIŃSKI, then a senior lecturer at the conservatoire in Katowice. He returned to Katowice in 2015 to play the opening concert in the newly built concert hall.

He has collaborated with many pre-eminent musicians - chamber partners such as Gidon KREMER, Kyung-Wha CHUNG and Yehudi MENUHIN, and conductors such as Leonard BERNSTEIN, Herbert von KARAJAN, Seiji OZAWA, Riccardo MUTI, Lorin MAAZEL, André PREVIN, Pierre BOULEZ, Zubin MEHTA, Bernard HAITINK, Stanisław SKROWACZEWSKI

and Sir Simon RATTLE. As part of the CHOPIN 200 celebrations in 2010, ZIMERMAN gave the CHOPIN Birthday recital in London's International Piano Series on the anniversary of the composer's birth. In 2013, to mark the centenary of LUTOSŁAWSKI's birth, ZIMERMAN performed the Piano Concerto - which the composer wrote for him - in a number of cities worldwide, including a performance at London's Royal Festival Hall with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Esa-Pekka SALONEN. In recent seasons he made his debut in China with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra under Paavo JÄRVI; concerts with the Taipei and Bangkok symphony orchestras and gave performances of BRAHMS Piano Concerto No.1 and BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No.4 with the London Symphony Orchestra and Berliner Philharmoniker under Simon RATTLE. He continues his collaboration with RATTLE and the LSO in 2017/18 with performances of The Age of Anxiety in connection with the BERNSTEIN anniversary celebrations.

ZIMERMAN transports his own piano for every recital, a practice which has made audiences more aware of the complexities and capabilities of the instrument. Performing on his own familiar instrument, combined with his piano-building expertise (acquired in Katowice and developed through close co-operation with Steinway's in Hamburg), helps him minimise any distractions from purely musical issues.

Krystian ZIMERMAN lives with his wife and family in Switzerland where he has spent the greater part of his life. Dividing his time between family, concert life and chamber music, he limits himself to 50 concerts per season. He takes a comprehensive approach to the music profession, organising his own management and studying hall acoustics, the latest sound technology and instrument construction. He has also applied himself to the study of psychology and computer science.

He has developed a similar approach to recording, a process which he controls at each stage. During his long collaboration with Deutsche Grammophon his recordings have earned him many top awards. In 1999 he recorded the CHOPIN Concertos with an orchestra specially formed for this project, and with whom he then toured throughout Europe and America, performing the Concertos to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Chopin's death. He has also recorded a disc of chamber music to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Polish composer Grazyna BACEWICZ, whose music he has championed. His most recent release is a recording of Schubert solo sonatas, produced by himself in Japan, which has met with universal acclaim.

Co-sponsor



Weiwuying Online Questionnaire

