Viertelnote

MusicJournal

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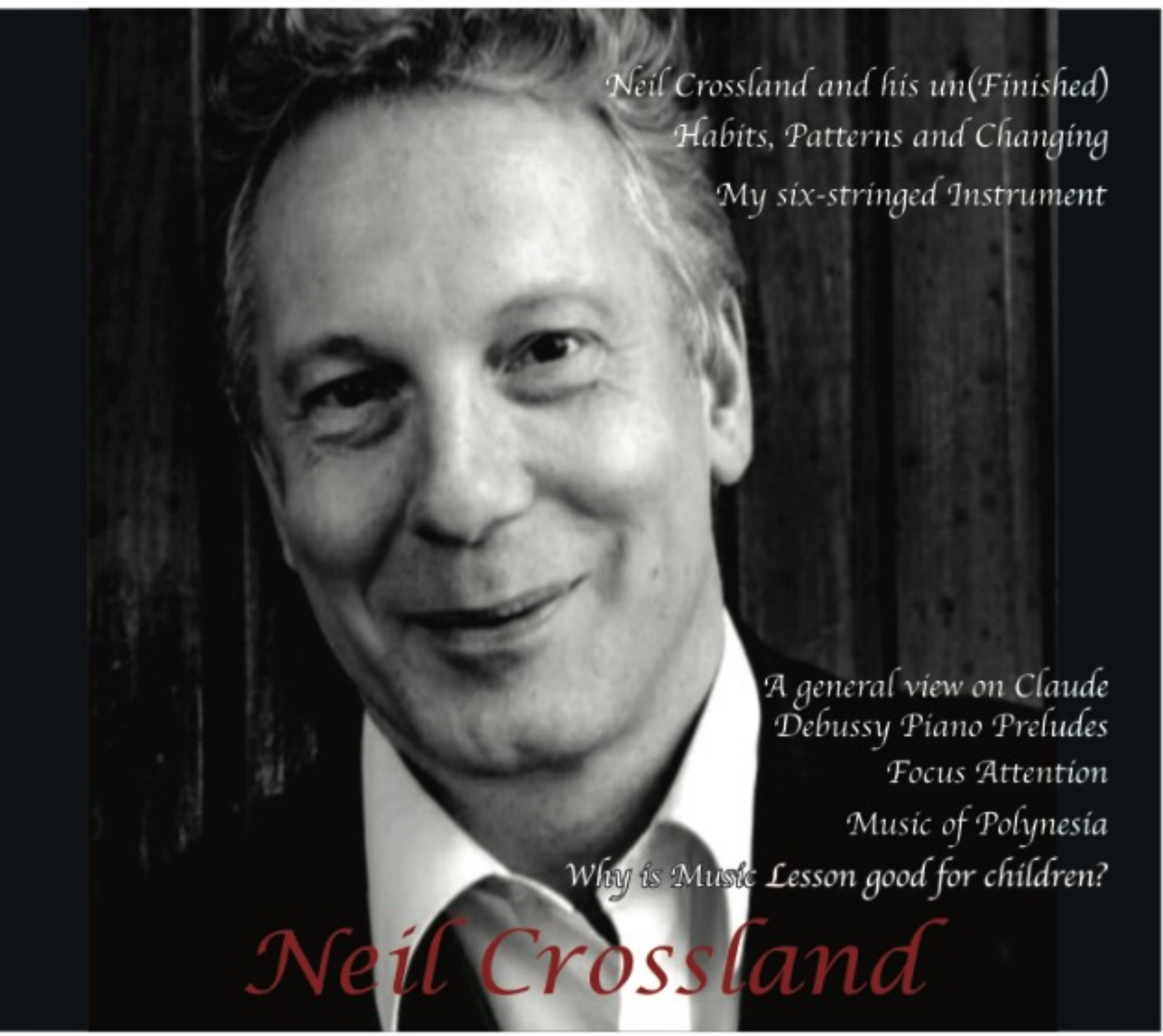

Neil Crossland and his um(Finished)

Habits, Patterns and Changing

My six-stringed Instrument

A general view on Claude Debussy Piano Preludes

Focus Attention

Music of Polynesia

Why is Music Lesson good for children?

Neil Crossland

quarterNotez
Events & Double Piano Studio

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Editor's Notes - about these unFinished Piano Sonatas

Many had asked, why a 'F' in upper case, in un(Finished) piano sonatas? Well, it simply means, It was previous unfinished, now known as un(Finished).

This set of un(Finished) piano sonata fascinates me!

Compositional skills aside, how much passion and sentiment are needed to be self-driven into completing a set of unfinished piano sonatas like these? What kind of spirit is needed to get through the entire process of composition?

There is a tiny yet interesting bit I wish to highlight. On his un(Finished) scores, Crossland had intentionally ended Schubert's writings with a dotted bar line, and all his compositions was penned only after the dotted bar line.

This was done so that all future performers may decide to still perform these sonatas as they used to be, or they may decide to conclude it with Crossland's version.

That said, all scores would soon be on sale on Quarternotez website. Alternatively, feel free to email Quarternotez for more information.

Well yes, back to unfinished, perhaps, I do have an unexplainable sentiment towards unfinished works, especially Franz Schubert's.

I clearly recalled the emotional entanglement on my very first encounter with Franz Schubert's first movement of Unfinished Symphony No. 8 many many years ago - alternating my mood between strolling on the cloud and walking in the thunderstorm had, for some reasons, touched me so much that I eventually burst into tears. I believed I was then totally unprepared for that repeated back and forth journey between the cheerful melody and the melancholic notes.

It was so annoying; yet so beautiful.

Unfinished matters, often acting like a connector, as well as a junction, seem to be putting together what will happen in the future and what had happened in the past. And this could well appear to be so interestingly moving – it, on one hand, behaves like an answer; yet on the other hand, leading to more answers.

What happens at this moment could well be the bearing of what had once happened; it could also be the underlying clues and codes for the many many future possible happenings.

Any work of art, whether finished or unfinished, is of value. Unfinished work can sometimes be very enlightening, as it tends to reflect more vividly certain struggle and mental process of the artist and revealed more about the artist's path of experimentation.

From unfinished to un(Finished), it is not a replacement, but an option. They contain a unique process of their own, and are charming, in their very own way.

Ler Boon Sin

About Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828)

Born lichtental, Vienna, 31 Januarty 1797; Died Vienna, 19 November 182

In a life spanning less than 32 years, produced over 1000 works, the vast majority of which were songs.

Other than songs produced masterpieces in almost every musical genre, most botably piano and chamber music.

Schubert Unfinished Sonatas

One might ask why did Schubert leave several of his piano sonatas unfinished? It is said that, as Schubert often works simultaneously on various musical project, so it is not certain whether Schubert actually composed a movement, which was then lost or, if he intended to return to these work at a later date.

Some argued that Schubert lacked the motivation to finish these movements, either because there are no opportunities for performances, or he had no publisher for these sonatas at that point of his time.

It is perhaps not surprisingly that a number of works were left unfinished as new ideas grabbed his attention, the most well known, of course, being his Eighth Symphony, which is usually performed as a two movement work.

Most of Schubert's unfinished piano sonatas contain all the movements he had in mind, and intended to compose, leaving just one or two of them incomplete. Sometimes the music just surfaced out or seemed so obvious; other times, ideas were sketched out for later completion.

In some sonatas, Schubert ceased composing after he had already written down the essential thematic components, such as the Exposition and the Development sections. In such a case, most of the remaining melodic and harmonic material can be constructed and completed, based on a considerable knowing and analysis of the sonata-form conventions, an understanding of the characteristic of the composer's compositional materials and an in-depth knowledge of Schubert's style and philosophy.

All the 7 unfinished piano sonatas as follows.

Sonata in E major D.157
Sonata in C major D.279
Sonata in F sharp minor D.571
Sonata in C major D.613
Sonata in F minor D.625 & D.505
Sonata in C sharp minor D.655
Sonata in C major 'Reliquie' D.840

Musical Titbits

As a child, Ludwig had a difficult life. His father was a heavy drinker who never actualised his potential. Although Beethoven greatly loved his mother, she was unable to mitigate her husband's shortcomings. Their home, in Bonn, was generally an unhappy place. Ludwig inherited his grandfather's musical talent, but his father treated him harshly. Although his father bragged about young Beethoven's ability, he did not praise him in public. Historians and biographers believe the young boy never knew his father was proud of him.

Zayn Hooi, Grade 5, violin & piano

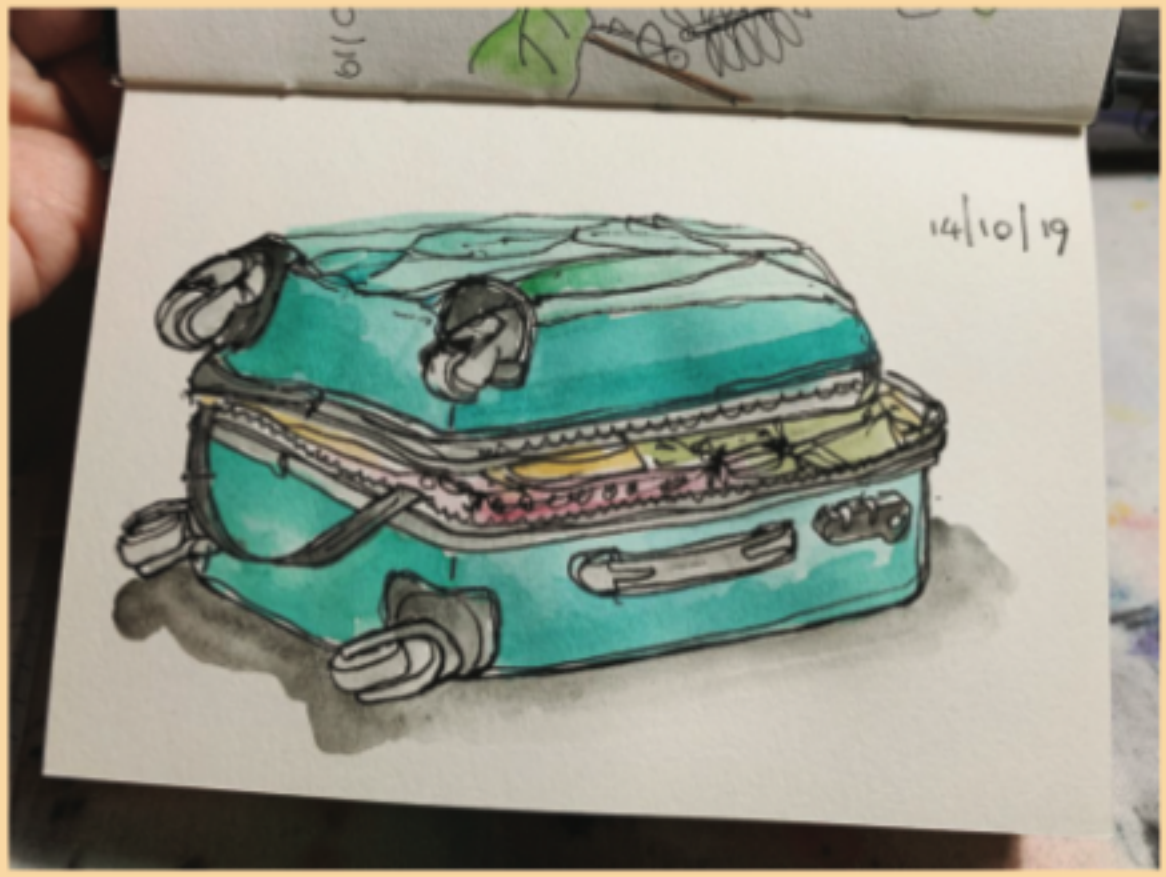
When Brahms turned thirteen, he began generating income for his family by playing at taverns, restaurants and local dance halls in the city's dock area. Working for prolonged periods in smoke laden rooms affected his health and he soon fell sick. Around 1847, he began learning the cello, but it came to an abrupt end when his teacher ran away with his instrument. During this period, he also performed in several concerts and began composing music for piano.

Zayn Hooi, Grade 5, violin & piano

MUSIC QUOTES

"A painter paints pictures on canvas. But musicians paint their pictures on silence."

~ Leopold Stokowski



painting by Ho Jiahui

Neil Crossland and his un(Finished)

Neil Crossland, concert pianist & composer, London

It was in 2004 that the idea of completing the 7 Schubert Unfinished Sonatas was born.

The inspiration came to me after listening to a documentary on TV about Schubert, his works and his life. Part of this documentary was presented by the well known Pianist Andre Schiff. Andre Schiff played the first movement of the Sonata in F sharp minor D.571. This movement was abruptly silenced at the end of bar 143 where Andre Schiff announced that it was at this point that Schubert left the work unfinished.

Such a beautiful movement I thought to myself and what a shame it is never performed. A few days later the idea of finding a score of this unfinished work came to me and it wasn't long before I had the possession of the F sharp minor Sonata in my hand. I was quick to realise that there were in fact 4 movements of which the 4th movement was also left incomplete. How strange I thought to myself, a composer finishing the inner movements but not the outer ones.

Having played the entire Sonata from cover to cover I thought to myself, this is a work that needs completion. It is a work that needs discovery; it is a work that is sublime, unique in its style, showing an inventive Schubert in a different light to the other Piano Sonatas which the composer wrote of which there are 14 completed Ones.

Please check out Neil Crossland's latest completed composition of the un(Finished) series on YouTube - Franz Schubert Symphony No. 8

Of all the 7 unfinished Piano Sonatas the majority of the time Schubert has given enough material in the exposition and in many cases the development too. Therefore these completions would rely purely on Schubert's own material without introducing new ideas.

The F sharp minor Sonata D.571 is one of these examples where the composer has started the development of the first movement and is using material from the exposition in a development of key changes to progress the movement back to a recapitulation.

In the last movement too, the composer has reached the development at bar 125 and continues to do so until he breaks off at the end of bar 174. It is for me to return the movement back to a recapitulation of the exposition ideas which I do so just 15 bars later in bar 189.

It is therefore fair to say that Schubert in most of these 7 unfinished Piano Sonatas had done enough work for the completed passages to stay in the style of the composer.

In Sonata in F-sharp minor D.571, Schubert leaves the 1st & 4th movement unfinished but gives enough material in the exposition and development to justify the completion purely on the material he has given.

In the final movement of this Sonata, I felt it necessary to add a coda. Although Schubert had given so much material to this movement, nowhere in this movement was there a hint as of how the piece could or should finish.

This was a challenge to end this movement and keep to the style which Schubert had presented.

Sonata in C major D.613 Schubert leaves the final movement unfinished but gives enough material in the exposition and development to justify the completion purely on the material he has given.

In Sonata in F minor D.625 & 505, Schubert leaves the 1st movement unfinished but gives enough material in the exposition and development to justify the completion purely on the material he has given.

I had then decided to end this first movement in the relative major which Schubert and many other classical composers would sometimes do.

The middle movement D.505 is thought to be part of this Sonata although Schubert did write a different D number when cataloguing this work.

In Sonata in C major 'Reliquie' D.840, Schubert leaves the 3rd & 4th movement unfinished but gives enough material in the exposition and development to justify the completion purely on the material he has given.

In Sonata in E major D.157, Schubert completes the first 3 movements but there is no 4th movement that we know of. 4th movement was hence written with ideas from Schubert's Ballet 'Rosamunde' and from Schubert's Piano music 'Moments musicaux'.

In Sonata in C-sharp minor D.655, Schubert writes just 73 bars of an exposition for the first movement.

One might ask the question as to whether this work should have been completed. After all, 3 of the movements are not from Schubert's pen and only an exposition of a first movement is sketched.

My answer to this question and the reason for completing this Sonata is mainly for the unusual writing, which Schubert presents in this exposition of a first movement.

First of all he is writing in the key of C-sharp minor, a key that he would never return to in the form of the Piano Sonata again. Nothing so unusual you would say about this although it does create a uniqueness in all of the 21 Piano Sonatas finished and unfinished by Schubert.

It is more the material itself that captivated my attention. The figurations and broken phrases are somewhat suggestive of a composer that is trying new ideas, a new style, breaking away from his melodic writing and experimenting with an unusual key of C-sharp minor to bring new ideas to himself.

Whatever was in Schubert's mind when attempting this departure from his songlike writing was clearly a direction that was short-lived.

When completing this movement and writing a further 3 movements I returned back to the melodious style we are so used to from Schubert. With the short melodic phrases that Schubert presents in the exposition I had elongated and introduced more flowing harmonies, bringing the style more akin to his other Sonatas.

It has been a great pleasure and enjoyment for me in completing these beautiful works of Schubert's. Also to record them and perform them adds to the experience and realisation of what a great master Schubert was. Schubert was indeed a prolific writer and it comes as no surprise that a few of his works were left unfinished. Apart from the Sonata in C-sharp minor D.655, there is no reason to believe that Schubert abandoned these unfinished Sonatas feeling that they were not worthy of completion. Not at all, there is too much materials written by Schubert in these Sonatas to show the contrary to this.

It is important for us all not to abandon these works. They form a large core of the 21 Pianos Sonatas that Schubert wrote. He had a great love for this instrument and we must continue to promote these gems of works.

Neil Crossland
29 July 2019, London

Un(Finished) MP3 Recording

Schubert un(Finished) Piano Sonatas mp3 CD

This is a remastered release of the original 3 CD-box set into a single mp3 CD.
Total playtime is 172:04

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Music of Polynesia

Words Alma Konjhodzic, piano teacher, London

For many of us, there is at least one place we visit, left such an impact that we always want to return to it. For me it was New Zealand and Hawaii. Polynesian Islands. One part of Oceania. A group of islands creating a slightly mended shape of the triangle drawn by joining the positions of New Zealand, Hawaii and Easter Islands. Other two parts of Oceania are Micronesian and Melanesia. They all musically influenced each other.

We associate Polynesian music with very tranquil, exquisite, captivating sounds of ukulele, mandolins, guitars, various drums, flutes. Apart from music, dance is another important component in Polynesian culture. Before European influence Polynesian traditional folk music included chanting, dancing and had a very functional role. Music was used as a form of communication about mythology and ancient rituals, accompanying games and festivals.

Each island has its own distinctive music sounds and dance.

Hawaiian traditional music contained various types of chanting (mele), had a simple melody and rhythm. Dance (hula) is complex in nature there are many hand motions used to represent the words in a song or chant. Ancient hula in Hawai□i, is called kahiko. Chant and traditional instruments accompany it.

Maori (New Zealand) folk music included poetry, dance, and is predominately sung. They used collection of instruments (such as wind instruments, whirled and percussion) called Taonga pūoro.

Maori traditional instruments were imitation of the sound of nature: winds, birds, insects, seas. Haka is Maori traditional dance performed by a group, with forceful and energetic movements, stamping of the feet with rhythmically shouted accompaniment.

Tonga traditional music can be very simple and uses only drums and vocals. One of the Tongan dances is called me'etu'upaki. The movements are largely with the paddles in the hand. there is a little slit drum to keep the beat, while the dancers sing the song. The beat is always slow in the beginning, but goes faster and faster when the end approaches. Traditionally it was intended for men although women may take part if there are not enough men. Otuhaka is another Tongan traditional dance with Samoan influence where performers are seating and only making head and arms movements.

Samoan music has choral singing with different kinds of idiophone drums. Conch shell (used on other islands for different reasons) for signaling. Traditional Samoan dance performed by group of seated men and women is called ma'ulu'ulu.

Traditional Tahitian music was steered by Festivals called heiva. In Tahiti, dancing was the most important part of the Tahitian life. It was used to celebrate events life. □ōte□a is a traditional dance characterized by a rapid hip-shaking motion to percussion accompaniment. The dance is with music only (drums) at a fast rhythm. There is no singing.

In the next issue, we would discuss more about Hawaii music.

LA PIANISTA PIANO COMPETITION 2020

10 Square Auditorium, Orchard Central, Singapore

18th and 19th April 2020

Rules & Regulations

1. Age-count of contestants is as of 1st **April 2020**.
2. REGISTRATION FEE :
   - » SG$ 125 : Toddler Artist, Free Choice A, Classic A, Elite A, ABRSM Grade 1, ABRSM Grade 2 Category.
   - » SG$ 135 : Kids Artist, Free Choice B, Classic B, Elite B, ABRSM Grade 3, ABRSM Grade 4 Category.
   - » SG$ 150 : Junior Artist, Free Choice C, Classic C, Elite C, ABRSM Grade 5, ABRSM Grade 6, Pop and Jazz Category.
   - » SG$ 175 : Senior Artist, Free Choice D, Classic D, Elite D, ABRSM Grade 7 Category.
   - » SG$ 200 : Advance Artist, Multi Hands Artist, Free Choice E, ABRSM Grade 8, Multi Hands Piano Category.
3. Registration ends on 1st **April 2020**.
4. All participants must submit music scores in PDF file and email to us no later than 1st **April 2020**.
5. Registration fee can be transferred to **POSB Current 809-02264-1**.
6. Payment receipt and registration form to be emailed to **lapianistasingapore@gmail.com**.
7. There should be no choice of date & time. Competition date & time would be allocated to all participants.
8. La Pianista reserves the rights to cancel the event, refuse or amend entry, should there be insufficient entries.

Note : Please bring along your birth certificate or student card for verification purposes, at the registration counter

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La Pianista Centre
+6281-5512-2626

Information and Registration
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Artist Category

Toddler Artist : 6 Years Old or Younger
Perform 1 piece with max time 2 mins, max 10 participants.

Kids Artist : 9 Years Old or Younger
Perform 1 piece with max time 3 mins, max 10 participants.

Junior Artist : 12 Years Old or Younger
Perform 1 piece with max time 4 mins, max 10 participants.

Senior Artist : 16 Years Old or Younger
Perform 1 piece with max time 5 mins, max 8 participants.

Advance Artist : 22 Years Old or Younger
Perform 1 piece with max time 7 mins, max 8 participants.

Multi Hands Artist : No Age Limit
Perform 1 piece with max time 5 mins, max 8 groups.
Maximum 8 hands in 1 group.

- Participants of the Artist Category are to adhere to the specific playing time allocated for each category.
- Exceeding the time frame of the respective category would result in their competition status being disqualified.
- Participants who apply for the Artist Category are required to apply for one additional category.
- Qualified winners are invited to perform at Award Winners' Concert at Esplanade Recital Studio, Singapore.

Category & Age Range

Free Choice Category
Perform 1 piece or 1 movement of own choice
Free Choice A : 8 Years old & below, max 2 mins.
Free Choice B : 9-11 Years Old, max 3 mins.
Free Choice C : 12-14 Years Old, max 4 mins.
Free Choice D : 15-17 Years Old, Max 5 mins.
Free Choice E : 18 Years Old & Above, max 6 mins.

Classic Category
Perform 1 piece or 1 fast movt of mandatory choices.

Elite Category
Perform 1 piece or 1 fast movt of mandatory choices.

ABRSM Graded Category
- Perform 1 ABRSM graded piece (grade 1 to grade 8). The participants would be divided in their respective grades, not age division. No age limit.
Year of Syllabus 2019-2020

Multi Hands Category
- Perform 1 piece or 1 fast movt of own choice.
- No age limit, maximum 8 hands, time limit : 3 mins.

Pop & Jazz Category
- Perform 1 pop or jazz piece of own choice.
- No age limit, time limit : 3 mins.

LA PIANISTA PIANO COMPETITION 2020

18th & 19th April 2020 | 10 Square Auditorium, Singapore

Mandatory Repertoires List

Classic Category
Perform 1 piece from following choices

Classic A : Age 10 Years Old & Below
1. JS. Bach : First Lessons in Bach
2. F. Burgmuller : 25 Easy and Progressive Etude, Op. 100
3. R. Schumann : Album for the Young, Op. 68

Classic B : Age 11 - 13 Years Old
1. F. Chopin : Waltz
2. A. Khachaturian : Pictures of Childhood
3. One fast movement from Mozart or Haydn Sonata

Classic C : Age 14 - 16 Years Old
1. D. Scarlatti : One fast movement sonata
2. P. Tchaikovsky : The Seasons
3. One fast movement from classical period sonata
   (Beethoven has to be before & not icluding Op. 31 No.1)

Classic D : Age 17 Years Old & Above
1. C. Debussy : Preludes Livre 1 or 2
2. F. Chopin : Nocturne
3. F. Schubert : Impromptu or Moment Musical
4. S. Rachmaninoff : Preludes Op. 23 or Op. 32

ABRSM Graded Category
Year of syllabus : 2019 - 2020
Perform 1 piece from ABRSM graded exam book
Grade 1 to Grade 8

- The Participants would be divided according to their representative grades, instead of their age.
- No age limit.

Express your feelings, Express your emotions
Through the beautiful words of music

Elite Category
Perform 1 piece from following choices

Elite A : Age 8 Years Old & Below
1. JS. Bach : First Lessons in Bach
2. F. Burgmuller : 25 Easy and Progressive Etude, Op. 100
3. One fast movement from classical period sonatina

Elite B : Age 9 - 12 Years Old
1. F. Burgmuller : 18 Etudes, Op. 109
2. F. Chopin : Mazurkas
3. C. Debussy : One piece from Children's Corner

Elite C : Age 13 - 16 Years Old
1. WA. Mozart : One fast movement sonata
2. LV. Beethoven : One fast movement sonata
   (Before and not including Op.90)
3. J. Haydn : One fast movement sonata

Elite D D : Age 17 Years Old & Above
1. F. Chopin : Etude
2. F. Liszt : Etude
3. One composition written after 1900

Multi Hands Category
Perform 1 piece of own choice

- The Participants would be divided according to their representative grades, instead of their age.
- No age limit.
- Maximum time : 3 minutes.
- Maximum 8 hands in 1 group.

Pop & Jazz Category
Perform 1 piece of own choice

- The Participants would be divided according to their representative grades, instead of their age.
- No age limit.
- Maximum time : 3 minutes.

Focus Attention

Words Carol Cheng, music psychotherapist & music teacher, Singapore

It is a common complaint from parents that their children have problem focusing or unable to focus on a task for an extended amount of time. In my teaching with children of special needs, this is one of the most prominent issues to address. Music is one way of helping children to develop focus attention; it also include children who adopt selective attention.

One of my students Jim, could not focus for more than 5 minutes on a given task when he first came in 2012. He was diagnosed with ASD at the age of 2, verbal and quite active. Today, his focus attention has improved significantly; he is able to do a 90mins session at one go.
In the first lesson, I tried engaging him to play on various musical instruments but he was not really interested. I found out from his mother that his favourite song is "twinkle twinkle little star". Hence I used this song to get his attention.

Basically, he just need to tap on a drum for 3 times on *** while I sing the complete phrase:

Twinkle twinkle ***
How I wonder ***
Up above the ***
Like a diamond ***
Twinkle twinkle ***
How I wonder ***

He was fully engaged for the first time and even requested to repeat several times. However, he could not tap at the right place and also the number of beats was too many. It took him about 5 sessions to get it right.

This activity may appear to be short and simple but it is an effective way to get children to focus for a start. Firstly by playing their favourite song is enough to engage them, then the children have to listen, wait for the specific moment to tap and tap the correct number of beats. These require active listening and focus attention. This activity can be done with some variations such as changes in tempo and dynamics or injecting unexpected pauses. More of such variations and its function will be discussed on the next issue.

Painting by Ho Jiahui

MUSIC QUOTES

"Music... can name the unnameable and communicate the unknowable."

~ Leonard Bernstein

Why is Music lesson good for children?

Goh Yeong Huay, piano teacher, Singapore

The best way to overcome shyness and fear of public performance is by providing non threatening opportunities to perform. Mini concerts and performance classes help students to get used to performing before people and they will eventually gain enough poise and confidence.

I asked my students one day: What is the meaning of life? What should we achieve?

One said to get good marks, to get into good school, to get good grades to apply for high paying jobs...etc..

A more pensive one answered: it depends, a doctor would want to heal people; a business person would want to make as much money; and a musician will share the joy of music to as many people as possible..

Why do parents send their children for music lessons? I'd like to suggest a few reasons.
Music is one of God's precious gift. Having the skills to create it will be a privilege many yearn.

There are also life skills that children pick up from taking music lessons.

Besides appreciation for the aesthetics, responsibility, discipline, perseverance, problem solving and confidence are among some qualities that a successful being possess.In this modern world, the quest for material success often overshadows a deeper need for the enjoyment of beauty. Great music can strike a chord within that pop culture cannot stir. This can lead to the love for the arts. It will be a great gift if a child learns to revel in the joy of music.

Responsibility, discipline and perseverance go hand in hand. It is essentially an individual effort in mastering an instrument. I tell my students that one thing I cannot do for them is to practise for them. Once a child owns the responsibility and discipline to spend hours improving himself, wonderful byproducts like perseverance and overcoming problem develop.The best way to overcome shyness and fear of public performance is by providing non threatening opportunities to perform. Mini concerts and performance classes help students to get used to performing before people and they will eventually gain enough poise and confidence.

My six-stringed Instrument

Words Ryanne Ow, Grade 8, piano

An instrument believed to have originated in the early 16th century, the guitar is an instrument that has become widely popular. From bands to soloists and online stars, many have picked up on the guitar. This simple six-stringed instrument has many forms and types. From the classical to the acoustic and electrical guitars, there is much variety to choose from.

The Classical Guitar shot to popularity in the 17th Century as the lute and other counterparts declined. However, it would remain as an amateur's instrument the till the early 19th century. Today's modern classical guitar techniques is accredited to Spaniard Francisco Tárrega, whom many classical guitarists around the world deem as the Father of Guitar. Around the 20th century, the guitar gained further traction as Andres Segovia, a talented guitarist, influence helped establish Antonio de Torres's classical guitar as a concert instrument. This was further explored when composers wrote more serious pieces for the instrument, including several chamber ensembles.

As time passed, the world revolutionized and then came the expansion of electromagnetism, sending a shockwave of evolution into the more classical and traditional styles of playing the guitar. It was around this period when the Europeans' fully steeled-stringed version of the guitar started to rise in popularity into the acoustic guitar that we know today.

This caused the modern guitar to start evolving again, allowing for its roots to spread even further.

Today, the guitar we know is vastly different from how it began. It can be played as a solo instrument, be part of a rhythm section, used just for playing bass lines and even bringing a new twang of life in certain genres of music. It has deeply rooted itself into the foundations of many kinds of music and continues to develop as new artists and online stars pick up on it to forge their own paths in the world.

Musical Titbits

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was the sole-surviving son of Leopold and Anna Maria Mozart. Leopold was a successful composer and violinist, whereas Wolfgang's mother, Anna Maria, was born to a middle class family of local community leaders. Wolfgang's only sister was Maria Anna. With their father's encouragement and guidance, they both were introduced to music at a young age. Leopold started Maria Anna on the keyboard when she was seven, as three-year old Wolfgang looked on. Mimicking her playing, Wolfgang quickly began to show a great understanding of the piano. Soon, he too was being tutored by his father.

Zayn Hooi, Grade 5, violin & piano

Practising is like going to the gym to train our muscles. We need to have strong muscles in order to run fast, or run long distant. If we dont practise, our muscles and joints will be stiff and will not be able to move to our command when we want them to.

I dont have specific guide on practising, but I do tell my students specifically what I look for in each piece, so that the students know what to work on, what to look out for when he practises. Practising without an aim is pointless. The students' ears are their "teacher" when they practise at home. The "teacher" has to be activated when they practise, to make sure that they are producing the outcome wanted.

Charles Pui, Piano Teacher, Singapore

"I do not have time to practise'
~ What piano teachers think?

"I have no time to practice." - I believe this is the statement most of the piano teachers will hear from their students. Students nowadays are loaded with tons of school works and tuition classes, having a daily practice seems like a mission impossible. Nevertheless, with some techniques of practice and good time management, as well as the cooperation from the parents, we can still make practice a routine. You don't have to practice everyday. You can be excused from practice one or two days in a week. Also, you can divide the practice times into small segments, you don't have to schedule long hours to sit in front the piano. Instead, it would be good enough if you can squeeze out 10 or 20 minutes to run through all the pieces and assignments given by your teacher. Focus on difficulties.

First practice you might want to run through everything you have learnt from the previous lesson. Subsequently, you can focus on those difficult parts in a piece. It's bad just to play through the pieces all over again and again without correcting the mistakes and settling those "hiccups" that happen along the playing. Parents play an important role to prod the children to do the practice. Most of the children won't push themselves to sit on the piano bench initiatively, parents need to remind the children to practice, firmly and perhaps, more consistently. Piano learning is a long journey. It might be tough, but once you have mastered it, it brings you enormous enjoyment and satisfaction.

Chloe Khor, Piano Teacher, Singapore

The greatest obstacles to students' practising schedule would be the amount of homework and extra classes from school. Most of the time, priority must be given to school-related activities, thus little time is left for practising.

A student shouldn't quit instrumental studies. The focus of instrumental studies should be on the process, not the outcome. The learning process trains the student to focus, cultivates good habits, and provides the student with life-long enjoyment in music.

There is always time to practise. The student can do mental practising when he is away from the piano, or when he is doing some manual work that dont require mental work

Lim Geok Choo, Piano Teacher, Singapore

Habits, Patterns and Changing

Words Michal Tal, concert pianist & lecturer, Israel

How many times you said to yourself: "Why am I doing this again?" after you listen to your own recording/ a bad day of practicing/ a frustrating lesson with a student / a feeling that you are stuck and cannot change actions...
We all have habits: in our daily routine, in our personal behavior and of course in our work. Some of them good (up to a certain time and point) and some are not good for us, however it is very difficult to get rid of them. Being a musician and a teacher forces you to be aware all the time on your habits according to the student. It is almost like a constant mirror in front of you.
Here are some general habits that we and our students tend to make:
-Excessive and incoherent Rubatos and changing time and rhythm: Rubatos are created by emotional impulses or overcoming a technical difficulty. Sometimes it happens for both reasons. A fixed rubato is the most difficult to change – such as one that you have been doing for days/months/-years.
-Warmups : we tend to keep sometimes our daily warmup routine fixed for a long period of time: for example, practicing the scales/arpeggios exactly in the same touch/dynamic/tempo.

-Etudes: We and our students tend to keep sometimes the same etude for a long time (also part of warmups)

-Learning a new piece: each one of us has his/hers own habit of learning new repertoire. Some students are used to learn a piece only separate hands first, some students just tend to sight-read (those who do it fast)

and stay in this stage, some students tend to learn note-by-note and not in phrases, etc.

Psychologists state that a habit is a routine of behavior that is repeated regularly and tends to occur subconsciously. So, the subconscious is a vicious circle: If we are not aware of what we are doing consciously, we are trapped in the habit all over again. So how do we suppose to get rid of these unnecessary habits?

Maybe the most difficult habits to understand are those of the transfer students. It is difficult to tell first if a habit is formed by a different teaching, or it is the students' personal ones. Usually it takes time to understand the pattern – to see where exactly it comes from, and then the code has to be cracked. So what did we do in order to get our students to get rid of them in their playing and practicing?
Again, I try to get some help from psychology: The idea that Old habits are hard to break and new habits are hard to form because the behavioural patterns which humans repeat become imprinted in neural pathways, but it is possible to form new habits through repetition.
Repetition, the word musicians know most…

So , here is some ideas after some thinking:

-Rubatos and swaying with time: It is important that the student will be aware of his habit ,so that the teacher should play and demonstrate in order to make the student listen in a new way. Then, one must go to the other extreme in order to break the habit and repeat it every day: practicing with more objective approach, using more the metronome not as a "mechanical" instrument but as a device of indication and as a "conductor" . Then the teacher and student should look at the composition from a different angle: understanding the structure and rhythm, understanding the harmonic content, etc. Do not expect fast and big changes. Be patient.

-Warmups: Change the order constantly. If you always start with a scale, then start today with a different pattern: Arpeggio, diminished chord , etc. Change the order every day. Keep the constant change but a little every day.

-Etudes: Keep changing levels, composers and always look for interesting pieces that you never know before. The same book that you worked years ago has many more great etudes- keep reading them and suggest for your students .Do not be afraid to teach a piece that you never played. Learn it and warm up this piece every day for a few minutes.

-Learning a new piece: if the student is used to start separate hands, let him/her try both hands even a few measures and do not give up! Sometimes it can take the whole lesson, but remember – repetition is necessary. If the student is not used to separate hands – insist on doing so (and play with him/her the other hand)

In future writing I will relate to physical/technical habits, which are very different and need another approach.
I wish the new Jewish year will be full of constant inspiration and changing, moving forward and that we will throw away some unnecessary habits…off to practice a new piece in a different way.

A general view on Claude Debussy Piano Preludes

Words Roberto Russo, concert pianist & lecturer, Italy

The first book of Debussy Piano Preludes was edited in Paris by Durand on April the 14th, 1910. Although Claude Debussy gave few information about the dates of composition of some specific piece (which shows that the entire cycle would be created in a couple of months), some musical notes confirm that the composer began this project at least in 1907. The entire book wasn't premiered in its cyclical continuity, but all pieces were randomly performed between 1910 and 1912. All these compositions immediately gave the audience the impression of such a new music, especially in terms of form, harmony and inspiration.

In order to confirm how intimate the author considered the atmosphere of his Préludes, Debussy himself recommended to perform them "entre quatre-z-yeux", that is in the intimacy of few listeners. The composer himself, Ricardo Viñes and Franz Liebich premiered Debussy's preludes, and all these first performances took place in Paris.

For many reasons, Debussy Piano Preludes represent the perfect incarnation of his own musical creed: the music seems to be very evocative, deeply poetic, essential, almost an impression. The uncertainty and ambiguity are the most evident characteristics, in both musical form and harmonic choices, as well as dinamics: a kind of musical-philosophical-aesthetic revolution grown in parallel with some other artistic movements born in France at the end of the XIX century, such as Impressionism and Symbolism.

This cultural humus contributed to develop and flourish Debussy's aesthetic doctrine and to pursue the ideal of his music talent, first of all to get rid of all syntactic rules of the past, together with all established development procedures in music. According to Debussy, music should not follow any theory, and the composers should prefer the use of free, floating chords and non-functionally interconnected harmonies.

Debussy music, in fact, lies in a constant suspension. The ear of listeners is often in a steady state of uncertainty and, at the same time, of infinite freedom. This feeling comes from the possibility to jump from one musical idea (or section) to another without preparation or a consequential logic. Besides, these features also cover secondary elements, such as the titles of the pieces.

Never before Debussy titles were so far from canonic musical names: instead of sonata, variation, symphony, fugue, rondo, in Debussy we find words like Images, Estampes, Syrinx, Children's corner, L'Isle Joyeuse. And often the titles of his compositions are connected to poems, to the elements of Nature, to old myths, to imaginary characters or ancient civilizations, often so distant in time and space.

This is just the case of his piano preludes! For Claude Debussy the titles must have just a merely indicative function, without a key role in the interpretation. This is confirmed by the strange characteristic of placing all titles in parentheses, at the end of each piece instead of beginning, as an added clue to interpretation. Perhaps a way to tell the interpreter that the title is just an idea, a possible key to reading.

MUSIC QUOTES

"If music be the food of love,

play on."

- William Shakespeare

drawing by Ynez Hooi

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QUARTERNOTEZ MUSIC CAMP BERLIN/PRAGUE 2020

Masterclass by Dr. Jairo Geronymo & Dr. Deborah Martin
A weekend of enriching and exciting music camp in Berlin. with Leo Kestenberg Musikschule, Berlin.
The music camp will emphasize on sight-reading and group piano playing - Piano Orchestra
A student concert would then be put up by both the Berlin Students, together with the Singapore Students.

There would also be Piano Masterclass after the Student Concert.

Masterclass by Ms Jana Chaudhuri & Mr Debashish Chaudhuri
An exciting one-day trip to Petrof Museum & Petrof Factory.
We would hold our solo & ensemble masterclass at the auditorium of the Petrof Musem. After the masterclass, the students and teachers can see how the pianos are made and also learn about the history and see the historical pianos in the museum. We would even get to see the newest model - Antonin Petrof.

Apart from the classes and museums, we would also be attending classical concerts and tour some highlights of both Berlin and Prague. (Timetable would be sent out to all participants via email by 15 October 2020)
We would make a small extension trip to Vienna - to visit the Composers' Grave, Beethoven Museum, Schubert House, etc

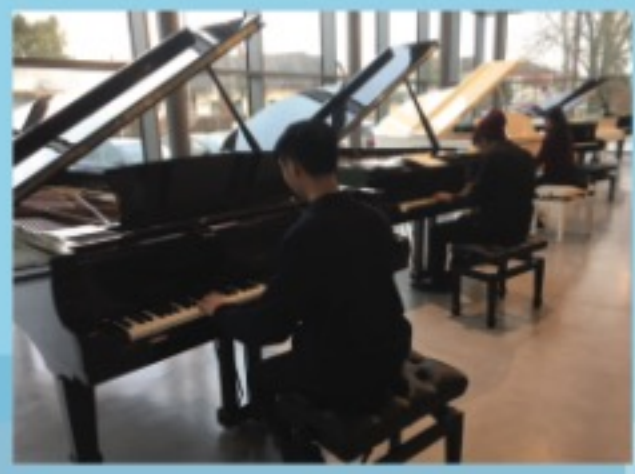
We encourage parents to join in to make this a family cum educational trip.
Simply leave your children with us during the program time and pick them up when they are dismissed.

Parents are welcome as audiences for the Student concert and both masterclasses.

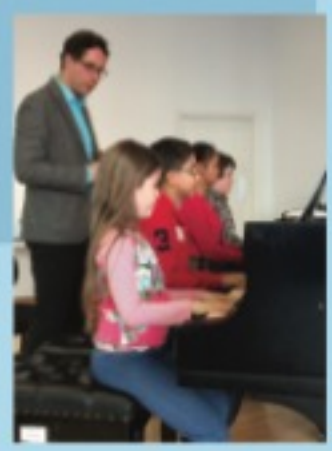
Date of the Trip
Tentative date: 24 November 2020 (To be confirmed)
Please call/email for more information & itineraries

Date of the Program
5 nights in Berlin
4 nights in Prague

Visiting Professors/Performers
Dr. Jairo Geronymo (Leo Kestenberg Musikschule, Germany)
Dr. Deborah Martin (Ithaca College, New York, United States)
Ms Jana Chaudhuri (One of the top pianists in Czech Republic)
Mr Debashish Chaudhuri (Czech based Indian conductor)



Cost per particpant SGD $1950 (*excluding air tickets, train tickets, hotels, meals, etc)*



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