Sarah Chang shines with the SSO

CIMB-GK donates $1.5m to SSO

SSO Benefit raises over $1m

Daniel Hope: Masterful Mendelssohn

Leila Josefowicz: A life less ordinary

Sarah Chang shines with the SSO
A legacy of patronage begins

CIMB-GK donates $1.5m to the SSO

CIMB-GK Securities Pte Ltd has donated $1.5 million to the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. This is the largest single donation received by the SSO in its 29-year history. To mark the contribution, CIMB Group Chairman Tan Sri Dato' Md Nor Yusof presented a cheque to SSO Chairman Prof Cham Tao Soon at a private dinner on March 6 graced by the Guest of Honour, Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong and Chairman of SSO’s Endowment Fund Committee Mr Goh Geok Khim. In appreciation of the donation, SSO presented CIMB-GK with the SSO Benefactor Award.

While CIMB Group has an established programme for its corporate social responsibility and philanthropic initiatives, the SSO is the first charity in Singapore to benefit from the Group’s support. CIMB-GK brings global potential, especially with its corporate advisory services in Singapore, Jakarta, Hong Kong, Bangkok, London and New York.

CIMB-GK is the international investment banking and securities franchise of CIMB Group. It offers institutional and retail broking, wealth management, investment banking and corporate advisory services in Singapore, Jakarta, Hong Kong, Bangkok, London and New York.

Said Tan Sri Dato' Md Nor Yusof: “The SSO brims with global potential, especially with the release of its recent CD Seascapes, which earned international praise as an exquisite piece of work. CIMB believes in striving for excellence through continued education and development, and we are deeply pleased that our contribution will go towards providing SSO members with opportunities to interact with, and learn from internationally acclaimed conductors and musicians. We are certain this will also boost the orchestra’s repertoire and programming, as well as the audience’s enjoyment of its performances.”

Currently the SSO operates on an annual budget of $15.5 million. With the additional $1.5 million from CIMB-GK, the SSO will be able to bring renowned international guest conductors and soloists to Singapore over the next three years, attract talents to the orchestra and create more opportunities for talented Singaporean musicians.

FURTHER PRAISE FOR THE SSO

Following SSO’s highly successful concert tour of China in October last year, rave reviews were published in two reputable American periodicals, American Record Guide and Fanfare. The article in the January/February 2008 issue of American Record Guide by Robert Markow was titled “Those Sensational Singaporeans.” Music Director Lan Shui was praised for instilling in his musicians “a level of discipline found in only a handful of the world’s top orchestras.” Even SSO’s musicians were singled out for plaudits, including principal oboist Rachel Walker; English horn player Elaine Yeo and principal clarinettist Ma Yue. Here are some quotable quotes:

“The SSO played like gods, and the audience responded accordingly. This is an orchestra on the edge of technical perfection.”

“40 years ago, Herbert Kupferberg wrote a book about the Philadelphia Orchestra called Those Fabulous Philadelphians. Today he might have written Those Sensational Singaporeans.”

“The SSO displays a glow and richness of sound that is immediately striking – the kind of sound one used to associate with orchestras like Philadelphia and Boston. There are no weak sections, the strings are the orchestra’s greatest strength. Rachmaninoff’s lushly romantic Symphony No. 2 proved an ideal for all 63 string players to pour forth waves of glorious sound.”
SSO Benefit raises over $1m

The SSO Benefit Dinner at St Regis Singapore on March 29 raised $1,056,090 for the orchestra. Chairlady of the SSO Ladies League, Mrs Odile Benjamin, together with her league of 14 ladies, spearheaded this black-tie fundraiser. President S R Nathan and Mrs Nathan were the Guests-of-Honour. President S R Nathan presented the SSO Benefactor Award, recognizing corporations and individuals who have donated $1 million to the SSO, to Siemens Private Limited and Singapore Petroleum Company Limited. (Please see Pg 10 for more photos.)

Siemens donates $750,000 to SSO

On January 15, Siemens celebrated its 100th anniversary in Singapore with a ceremony graced by President S R Nathan. President S R Nathan unveiled the sculpture, “Vehement” by Phoon Yew Tien’s, at the Victoria Concert Hall. Addressing the guests were Dr Klaus Wucherer, Executive Advisor to the CEO of Siemens AG and Mr Hans-Dieter Bott, Country Manager of Siemens Singapore.

Aside from its investment and contribution to Singapore’s economy and technology, Siemens has been an ardent supporter of the local arts scene. An example is the sculpture “Chuan” (Chinese for creativity) that it bought from the late Singapore sculptor Chen Jin Min. In conjunction with its celebrations, Siemens donated the sculpture to the SSO, where it will be showcased.

A splendid birthday party

The Singapore Symphony Orchestra is one year short of its 30th birthday. How time flies! Its 29th Anniversary Concert on January 12 saw many friends, sponsors and supporters partake in the birthday celebrations. Besides the music, audience members also enjoyed a slice of birthday cake sponsored by Conrad Centennial Singapore. Young Singaporean violinist Grace Lee dazzled in Ravel’s Tzigane, as did SSO Principal Bassoonist Zhang Jin Min in a rarely-heard work for bassoon and orchestra – Elgar’s Romance and Weber’s Andante and Hungarian Rondo. Music Director Lan Shui did the honours.

Emanuel Ax to open 08/09 season

Celebrated American pianist Emanuel Ax will open the SSO’s new 2008/2009 season on June 27. The Polish-born pianist first captured public attention in 1974 when, at 23, he won the first Artur Rubinstein International Piano Competition in Tel Aviv. He will perform Chopin’s Second Piano Concerto in a gala concert with the SSO and Music Director Lan Shui.

Among the other season highlights are concerts featuring international guest artists such as pianists Yefim Bronfman (August 23), Vladimir Feltsman (October 17), Japanese-American conductor Kent Nagano will conduct the concert version of Richard Strauss opera Elektra on 8 January 2009, a Southeast Asian premiere of the work.

Fans of choral music can look forward to performances of Haydn’s Nelson Mass on 11 April 2009, and Berlioz’s La damnation de Faust on 2 May 2009. Priority booking for SSO Friends and 08/09 Subscribers will commence on May 8, and tickets will be available to the public from May 22.

Music for Chinese New Year

More than 600 people joined the SSO at its free outdoor concert at the Singapore Management University on February 15. This concert was followed by a heartlands concert in Nee Soon South near Khatib MRT station the next evening, which saw an enthusiastic audience of 1300 residents. This concert was followed by a heartlands concert in Nee Soon South near Khatib MRT station the next evening, which saw an enthusiastic audience of 1300 residents. More than 1,300 Nee Soon South residents turned out.
SSO’s Mahler symphony cycle completed!

Editor Chang Tou Liang traces the Singapore Symphony Orchestra’s quest to perform all of Gustav Mahler’s eleven symphonies.

At long last, The Singapore Symphony Orchestra’s love affair with the symphonies of Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) was completed in January this year with the Southeast Asian premiere of the Third Symphony. This journey had been keenly-followed by scores of Singaporean Mahlerites, and began way back in 1986 when Maestro Choo HoeY conducted the Fourth Symphony at Victoria Concert Hall, with Solving Faringer as the soprano.

No. 4, the shortest and orchestrally lightest in the canon, was the obvious choice for the first Mahler symphony to be attempted by the SSO. Since then, several famous sopranos including Ying Huang and Suni Jo have performed its final movement Das himmlische Leben (The Heavenly Life). Here it was another two years before SSO attempted its next Mahler symphony, No. 1 (The Titan), as part of the 1988 Singapore Arts Festival. This has become a warhorse for the orchestra over the years, and a ‘live’ performance of it was recorded on DVD at the Esplanade in 2003.

As expected, the whole orchestral symphonies were performed before those which required vast choral forces. Singaporeans first heard No. 5 with its ethereal Adagietto in 1989, and it was only three years later in 1992 when Choo HoeY brought out No. 9 from the orchestra. The latter is also very close to Lan Shui, who conducted it from memory and brought it along to SSO’s first tour of China in 2001. It was SSO which also gave the Chinese premiere (in Shanghai) of the masterpiece.

The Song of the Earth (Das Lied von der Erde) was first performed here in 1989 with tenor John Mitchinson and mezzo Ulfa Sippola. SSO gave two further readings including a world premiere of the version sung in Chinese in 2005 with Chinese soloists Warren Mok and Liang Ning. This was recorded (SSO’s first Mahler recording) on the BIS label, and named by music critic Norman Lebrecht as his CD of the week in early 2008.

The Singapore Symphony Chorus also performed the first of the eight movements from the uncompleted No. 10 (Symphony of a Thousand) in 1999 celebrating SSO’s 20th anniversary.

The most ambitious Mahler symphony, No. 8 (Symphony of a Thousand), was presented in 2004 during the Singapore Arts Festival. On stage were close to 500 performers including eight soloists, five choirs (including a children’s choir from Beijing and a mixed choir from Latvia) and 136 musicians. Needless to say, it was an unforgettably overwhelming experience that filled the 1600-seater concert hall to capacity on two evenings.

The final piece of the jigsaw came with the formation of the Singapore Symphony Children’s Choir. Its first major project was to be a part of the crowning achievement of SSO’s concert experience – Mahler’s Symphony No. 3, once listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as the world’s longest symphony. It took SSO some 22 years to complete its first Mahler cycle, but is it too soon to be dreaming of the next?

Syphony | Year of premiere | Conductor | Also conducted by
--- | --- | --- | ---
No. 1 | 1988 | Choo HoeY | Lan Shui, Guenter Herbig
No. 3 | 1994 | Gilbert Kaplan | Lan Shui
No. 8 | 2004 | Lan Shui | John Nelson
No. 9 | 2004 | Lan Shui | Choo Hoey, Choo Hoey

SSCC shines in Mahler’s Third

After its “soft launch” in last year’s Christmas Concerts, the Singapore Symphony Children’s Choir made its splash, performing in the fifth movement (Es singen die Engel) of Mahler’s Third Symphony. Singing the celestial role of angelic hosts to mezzo-soprano Nancy Maultsby’s solo, it was a sublime moment of musical bliss to behold.

The women of the Singapore Symphony Chorus also participated in this Singapore premiere of what is regarded the world’s longest symphony, conducted by Maestro Lan Shui. The auspicious concert on January 26 also marked the completion of SSO’s Mahler symphonic cycle, which began in the 1980s.
When Daniel Hope was eight, he smuggled a copy of Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto into the toilet at the Yehudi Menuhin School, looked the door and started playing. The young violinist, frustrated at being restricted to learning a four-minute-long Bach phrase to sound, and my technique, in a sense I think of him as a kind of sport trainer always trying to get the best out of his athletes”.

The Music of Time

Following the footsteps of his father, author Christopher Hope, Daniel Hope recently published a German book titled The Music of Time, chronicling his family’s history over five generations. From his grandmother he knew about the elegant villa in Berlin they owned before they were forced to flee Germany to South Africa. The villa was to become home to a Jewish school before they were forced to sell it for a low price. Today it is home to an archeology institute.

Not surprisingly, his parents withdrew him from the school. Joining the Royal Academy of Music, he then became a student of Russian pedagogue Zakhar Bron, whose protege Maxim Vengerov was making news at the time. Come Play, 17, he will perform that same Mendelssohn concerto with the SSO at Esplanade.

“Leila Josefowicz is a wonderful violinist. It’s wonderful to not be so young.”

Canadian-born violinist and former child prodigy Leila Josefowicz has grown up. The musician, who just turned 30 last October, says that she has gone through a lot in her life.

“Sometimes I feel that my age is catching up with my life experiences,” she says in a phone interview. “It’s hard to be 18 or 25 in this career. It’s much easier to be mature. So it’s wonderful to not be so young.”

Great expectations

It all began when her father, a scientist who loved the violin, started her on the Suzuki method when she was three. At around the same time her family moved from Ontario to California, an hour’s drive north of Los Angeles. When she was eight, her parents found her a teacher residing a few hours’ drive away, who was able to encourage her individuality as a performer.

At the age of ten, Josefowicz appeared on a Bob Hope TV show for the first time. By that age she was already performing for presidents and famous stars at gala events in downtown Los Angeles and Beverly Hills.

She made her Carnegie Hall debut at the age of 16 and immediately followed this with her debut recording of the Tchaikovsky and Sibelius concertos for Philips Classics. Since that time she has appeared with many of the world’s most prestigious orchestras and conductors.

“I do realize now that it was a very intense childhood,” she recalls. “Many people were watching over me. My teachers and parents took me to lessons and in a lot of effort to make me who I am today. I must say it was an unusual way to grow up. I didn’t think about it when I was young but I suppose it was an exciting but strange childhood.”

“Now I have my child experiences at 30. And I’ll make up for it for the rest of my life. I practised very hard when I was young. And now I am able to relax more, knowing I did that part already.”

Breaking new ground

A regular, close collaborator with leading composers of the day such as John Adams and Oliver Knussen, Josefowicz is a strong advocate of new music. Her recent European engagements include performances of Knussen’s Violin Concerto with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and the Residentie Orkest in Amsterdam, and of John Adams’ concerto for electric violin.The Dhamra at Big Sur with the Netherlands Radio Symphony Orchestra under the baton of the composer himself.

Josefowicz’s most recent releases are both highly-acclaimed recordings for Warner Classics: a recital disc with John Novacek, praised for its eclectic programme and outstanding quality of playing; and a live recording of Shostakovich’s Violin Concerto No. 1 with the CBSO and Sakari Oramo.

Music and motherhood

The friendly violinist is more selective of engagements since starting a family. Her son Lukas, 8, is her pride and joy, and her mother keeps him company in their New York home when Josefowicz needs to travel for engagements.

“I try to plan my schedule so I don’t have too many long haul flights,” she says. “I also make sure I never do more than 3 weeks in a row. I never enjoy that much work anyway.”

“Lukas loves music but hates practicing. And he doesn’t like me to tell him what to do. Well you only have a childhood once. We play card games, go for bike rides and read about composers together. He is totally fascinated with composition. It’d be interesting to see what he’d become if he decides to go into music.”

Leila Josefowicz

A life less ordinary

By Cindy Lim

Event:

Fri 30 May, 7.30pm
Esplanade Concert Hall
GALA - THE BEAUTY OF BEETHOVEN

Conrad

A luxury business hotel located within Singapore’s leafiest commercial, entertainment and shopping belt. The luxurious guest and function rooms feature a wealth of services and facilities for the business and leisure traveller.
President S R Nathan and Mrs Nathan joined over 350 guests for an evening of Hollywood Magic at the SSO Benefit Dinner at St Regis Singapore on March 29. Rare vintage wines and a limited edition Chopard L.U.C Strike One watch were also secured for a silent auction. Guests were entertained by the SSO, the Singapore Symphony Children’s Choir, French heartthrob Cyril Niccolai and his band, as well as American singer Marianne Patterson and pianist Sam Tan.
As a secondary one student, Philip Ong joined the band in Victoria School and was given a free SSO ticket. The concert was conducted by Maestro Lim Yau and the evening’s programme consisted of Prokofiev’s Classical Symphony and the Lieutenant Kjie Suite.

“It was my first exposure to a life-long friend, and from then on, I realised that classical music was not all about Beethoven and Mozart,” he recounts. “It was about the celebration of life.”

While in the school band, the budding trumpeter was thrilled to be able to play his first classical piece on the instrument, Beethoven’s Egmont Overture. “It was rather challenging for a beginner. In fact, I was secretly going to play his first classical piece on the trumpet, but I was blown away. It was the best version of the Manfred I have heard!”

His love for music triggered, he started taking trumpet lessons. “It was rather challenging for a beginner. In fact, I was secretly going to play his first classical piece on the trumpet, but I was blown away. It was the best version of the Manfred I have heard!”

Some of his favourite musicians include Sarah Chang, Fou Ts’ong, Yin Chengzong and Martha Argerich. “My favourite conductor is Seiji Ozawa. His trademark parsimony and acute mastery of the orchestra have made watching his concerts both a treat for the ears and eyes.”

Music that binds
And indeed the beauty and spontaneity of a live performance cannot be rivaled. He remembers a chamber concert featuring an SSO quartet where one of the strings of the second violinist snapped towards the end of a 15-minute movement. “After changing the strings, the musicians played the entire piece again. So I was happy to be given a second treat!”

His one wish is for the SSO to set up a chamber music group. “I enjoy relating to the historical context of the music when it was composed or to a particular individual or place,” he adds.

“I am always a delight to listen to good classical music in renowned concert halls around the world – the Concertgebouw, Sydney Opera House, Royal Opera House, and Covent Garden and the Esplanade, to name a few. I think we are fortunate to have a world-class concert hall in Singapore where acoustics is generally good in different parts of the hall.”

Blown away
A huge fan of music by Russian composers (“their music was always full of life, passion and warmth”), Philip is also inclined towards choral masterpieces such as Handel’s Messiah or Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9.

He recalls listening to Choo Heoy conducting the SSO in Rachmaninov’s Manfred Symphony in 1992 over Symphony 92.4FM! “I recorded it on cassette tape and must have played it for a hundred times after that. The final movement featured the organ at the VCH, and I was blown away. It was the best version of the Manfred I have heard!”

WIN A $30 KINOKUNIYA BOOK VOUCHER
BY ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:
Who is the artist featured on the cover of this book?
Which pianist recorded Ravel’s Piano Concerto in G major and Rachmaninov’s Piano Concerto No. 4 on a now-legendary album?
Please send your answers and personal particulars to:
BravoSMO DVD Quiz
Singapore Symphony Orchestra
11 Empress Place, Victoria Concert Hall
Singapore 238874
Or e-mail: cindy@sso.org.sg
Closing date: 31 May 2008
The first correct entry drawn on 1 June 2008 will be notified accordingly.

DVD REVIEW

CLASSIC ARCHIVE: ISAAC STERN
EMI Classics Classic Archive

American violinist Isaac Stern (1920-2001) will be almost remembered for “saving” Carnegie Hall. As an instrumentalist, even he admits to be less of a virtuoso than someone like Heifetz. It shows up in his playing, but he makes up for it with its music that is full of heart and soul.

The Mozart concertos (Nos. 3 & 5) with the Radio-France Chamber Orchestra (Alexander Schneider conducting) from the 1970s French television archives display a rich and generous tone, always sweet but not cloying, and a personality that commands the stage. An even earlier black-and-white recording from the Salle Gaveau, Paris (1946) shows Stern at his prime. His unaccompanied Bach is near impeccable, while the Gemini Sonatas in D minor (Imprecius) ignores all “authentic” practices with its wide vibrato and piano accompaniment by Alexander Zakin. Kreisler’s bonbon “authentic” practices with its wide vibrato and piano accompaniment by Alexander Zakin.

WIN A COPY OF CLASSIC ARCHIVE: ISAAC STERN

BY ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:
1. TRUE OR FALSE. Isaac Stern was born in the Ukraine.
2. TRUE OR FALSE. Isaac Stern performed with the SSO in 1988.

Please send your answers and personal particulars to:
BravoSMO DVD Quiz
Singapore Symphony Orchestra
11 Empress Place, Victoria Concert Hall
Singapore 238874
Or e-mail: cindy@sso.org.sg

Closing date: 31 May 2008
The first correct entry drawn on 1 June 2008 will be notified accordingly.

The correct answers to last issue’s quiz were:
1. Chopin and Ravel wrote two piano concertos each.
2. TRUE. Ravel's Gaspard de la nuit is known as

The winner was Fenny Lee Teck Chan. Congratulations!
By Cindy Lim

The boyish 30-year-old musician was born in Aviles, a little city in the region of Asturias, in the Northern coast of Spain. The youngest of three boys, his eldest brother is now a mathematician, and the other brother is a fireman. He is newly married and lives in a rented apartment in Spottiswoode Park near Chinatown with his wife Elena, who gives Spanish lessons.

“Aviles is more than 1000 years old and still has some remains of the medieval wall which was surrounding it. I began my music studies at the Aviles conservatory and later I moved to the Asturias Conservatory, before continuing my studies in Manchester. Two of my most important teachers were Myra and Peter Pearse, outside of the conservatory.”

“When I was about seven years old my eldest brother was studying both guitar and violin, and he suggested that I join the conservatory as well. He told me he would make me listen to some different instruments, so I could choose between them. At the end he gave a tape with only the sound of a flute on it. Anyway that was enough, I really liked it!”

Spanish siesta

On his Spanish roots, Roberto tells you that most Spanish people are extremely friendly and sociable. “Many people think Spanish people are always having our siesta and we don’t work at all. That is definitely not true!” he adds with a laugh. “Also, when people discover I am Spanish, they like to say, “Spanish? Oh, Español! Real Madrid”

He quickly points out that football is perhaps his weakest sport. “I am definitely hopeless at playing football. Let’s just say I always bring my colleagues to the stadium.”

Seascapes

His favourite restaurants in Singapore include Maharaja in Boat Quay and Tapas Tree, a Spanish restaurant, in Clarke Quay. “Maharaja serves excellent Indian food and you can even see the VCH clock tower from where you are sitting.”

“Myra and Peter Pearse, outside of the conservatory.”

Spanish flautist Roberto Alvarez has lived and worked in Singapore for barely ten months, but he has already acquired a taste for the quintessential cup of kopi c (local coffee sweetened with evaporated milk).
MEET THE PIANISTS OF THE SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL PIANO FESTIVAL 2008

BACH TO THE FUTURE

This year marks the 15th anniversary of PianoFest, and it features more recitals (six) and pianists (seven) than any previous edition. Ever wondered how the decision of pianists to perform at the Piano Festival is arrived at? Artistic Director CHANG TOU LIANG reveals what inspired his choices in this year’s edition of Asia’s premier piano festival.

JENÔ JANDO (Hungary) 2 July

Which pianist has recorded the complete piano sonatas of Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn and Schubert, the complete piano concertos of Mozart, Bach’s Well-Tempered Clavier and Goldberg Variations? Not Ashkenazy, not Barenboim, but Jenô Jandó! This underrated artist has become of the most recorded pianists in history, with over two hundred recordings on the Naxos label to his name. His recordings of Bach and ‘Hungarian composers Liszt and Bartók’ are also characterised by a natural virtuosity, utmost respect for the musical score and unfailing good taste.

JENNIFER MICALLEF & GLEN INANGA (UK) 3 July

Jennifer (originally from Malta) and Glen (Nigeria) met at London’s Royal Academy of Music and this young and exciting duo was formed in 1994. Their repertoire includes the established classics as well as much 20th century music. Their recording of Robin Holloway’s Gilded Goldbergs on the Hyperion label was a landmark recording of a new work based on early music, and is a tour-de-force of pianistic achievement. I also witnessed them perform in Hong Kong and was bowled over by their exuberance and panache.

CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR (USA) 5 July

It has been a dream of mine to programme Bach’s Goldberg Variations alongside Frederic Rzewski’s The People United Will Never Be Defeated!, a set of variations inspired by the Goldbergs. But how many people on this planet could carry out this Herculean task? After conducting searches and quizzing artiste agents, I found my man – Christopher Taylor; the American super-virtuoso (and Harvard summa cum laude in Mathematics) who is also known to perform Messiaen’s Vingt regards sur l’enfant Jesus in a single concert. This Bach-Rzewski tandem is probably the first time such a programme is attempted in the world, so be sure not to miss it!

KONSTANTIN SCHERBAKOV (Russia), 6 July, 8pm

Konstantin Scherbakov has been a regular visitor to Singapore, performing recitals and concerts, and giving masterclasses at the National University of Singapore. It was at one of these events that I approached him to do a programme inspired by Bach. His recording of Shostakovich’s 24 Preludes and Fugues (Op. 87) had won the Cannes classical award, and he will perform a selection of these. Having surveyed Godowsky’s and the Liszt transcriptions of Beethoven’s symphonies, he also offered to perform the Bach-Godowsky Sonata No. 2 in B minor (BWV.1002) and – wait for this – Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony! Talk about closing the festival on a high!

SANDI KOH (Singapore) 6 July, 4pm

Young Virtuoso Recital in memory of the late Mr & Mrs Chang Kuo Chi

Young Singaporean Sandi Koh has been a prizewinner in the National Piano and Violin Competition in 2001 and 2003, a product from the School of Young Talents at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts. In the semi-final round of the 2003 competition, I was impressed by her performance of music by Ravel, Rachmaninov and York Bowen. Since returning from her studies in USA, she has also made progress as a sensitive chamber musician. Her recital showcases Bach, late Beethoven, Chopin and Bowen.

KIM SUNG-HOON (Korea) 4 July

Still in his 20s, Kim has won many prizes in international piano competitions. It was in Leeds University’s Grand Hall in 2006 that I watched him perform Bach’s Partita No. 6, a spellbinding reading that left me close to musical nirvana and grasping for superlatives – easily the single best performance of the competition. I also heard him in Mussorgsky’s Pictures at an Exhibition and Beethoven’s Sonata No.32 (Op. 111) in Hong Kong – very impressive too. His sheer musicality and stupendous technique belie a rather substantial physical girth, and I am glad that Singapore will get to hear this very fine artist.

Don’t forget to attend our pre-concert fringe events:

2 July: Why was Bach great?
By Dr Robert Casteels

4 July: Playing Bach on the keyboard: Piano or Harpsichord?
By Dr Lee Pei Ming

5 July: A 20th Century Goldberg: Rzewski’s The People United Will Never Be Defeated!
By Dr John Sharpley

6 July: Pianophile Forum: Great Bach Recordings (6.30pm)

All pre-concert events begin at 7pm unless stated otherwise.