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18th Annual WIPAC Winners Grand Prix Concert, Yiran Wang, pianist: A Special Gift to Interpret Melody

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“Music is enough for a lifetime – but a lifetime is not enough for music,” could not better articulate Pianist Yiran Wang’s devotion to piano performance. In his passionate recital at the Washington International Piano Arts Council’s “18th Winners Grand Prix Concert” at the Washington Arts Club, Mr. Wang reaffirmed the judges’ selection of him as WIPAC’s 2018 piano competition winner. As a pianist of substantial virtuosity, pairing his pianistic abilities with thought and sensitivity, Mr. Wang demonstrated this quality in his selection of pieces by Frederic Chopin and J.S. Bach.

The relationship between Bach and Chopin has been a subject of interest among a number of pianists who are familiar with the affinity that Chopin had for the music of Bach. Accounts by students of Chopin describe Chopin’s love for Bach, how he made his students learn the Preludes and Fugues of The Well-Tempered Clavier, and how he played them often himself. The only music scores that he had with him during his famous sojourn in Majorca, when he wrote his 24 Preludes which contain some of his most beautiful music, were those of the Well-Tempered Clavier.

Yiran Wang’s opening piece was the Bach-Petri arrangement of “Sheep May Safely Graze.” Egon Petri was one of the great pianists and students of Ferruccio Busoni who was known for his virtuosic transcriptions of Bach pieces, such as the Bach Chaconne, also on Yiran Wang’s recital program.

“Sheep May Safely Graze,” a reflective piece originally for soprano voice and transcribed for solo piano, revealed Yiran Wang’s gift for interpreting a melody. On the surface, it appears effortless to perform as a Bach Chorale, yet requires a pianist with the special gift to interpret melody to grasp its essence.

Yiran Wang captured the attention of the audience with the very well-known Chopin works: the “Scherzo No 2 in B flat minor Opus 11”; the “Ballade No 4 in F minor Op.52”; and the “Andante Spianato and Grande Polonaise Brillante Op.22.” The young pianist exuded a sense of confidence as well as a genuine desire to share his artistry with his audience.

Wang’s performance of the Bach “Siciliano from Flute Sonata No 2” as a transcription by Ludwig Stark, a great transcriber of works by Bach, Schubert and Brahms, created a peaceful interlude between the two large Chopin works, the Scherzo and Ballade.

In contrast, the Bach-Busoni “Chaconne from the Violin Partita No 2 in D minor,” is a mammoth work, demonstrating Mr. Wang’s balanced sense of virtuosity and stamina, as well as highlighting melodic lines and preserving the continuity of the piece of such lengthy duration.

A loyal and devoted WIPAC audience of musical connoisseurs continues to enjoy, year after year, the performances of remarkable piano artists, who have pursued their love for piano music while pursuing a career in other professions. So, it is with pianist Wang, a Cornell University engineering

and finance graduate and currently a portfolio manager at a US asset management firm, he has continued to perfect his piano artistry as he pursues his studies at Julliard in NY.

The Concert Committee Chairs for this year's Winners Grand Prix Concert were Rosalia Rodriguez-Garcia and John Williams. Mme. Chateau Gardecki, Founder and Chair of WIPAC, in her indomitable way continues to fulfill WIPAC's mission to "help generate a renaissance of interest in great piano artistry." WIPAC's President, Michael Davidson, expressed his appreciation for John and Chateau Gardecki for their devotion to the organization they created.



