



Ji-Yong, *pianist*

Bangkok Post

South Korean Piano Star Ji-Yong Thrills with his Interpretation of Masterpieces

The Bangkok Post
October 30, 2012



Making his Bangkok debut, the sensationally talented South Korean pianist Ji-Yong received many curtain calls from the audience after the final note of his last number of the night, Chopin's "Heroic" Polonaise. The concert was held at the Main Hall of Thailand Culture Centre, where the crowd was returned their generosity by Ji-Yong's encore in the form of an excitingly jazzy bravura piece by Ukrainian composer Nikolai Kapustin. The air seemed to literally stir.

The concert, as part of the Great Artists of the World 2012 series, celebrated Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's 80th Anniversary and was organized by the Ministry of Culture, Department of Cultural Promotion Fund in association with the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra.

Tuxedo and bow tie – the standard costume for a piano recital – was not a choice for Ji-Yong. With a glimpse of a smile, the 21-year-old supreme and charming pianist appeared on the stage in simple street wear typical of youngsters in Bangkok or Seoul. By starting his first phrase in the Preludium of J.S. Bach's Partita No.1 BWV 825, the audience knew that there was an endless sphere of sound to enjoy throughout the evening.

The whole set of dances was full of imagination and unpredictability – a subtle change was made in particular dances when they were repeated. The suite ended with the sheer driving force of fun, rhythmic patterns and hand crossing.

Ji-Yong devoted the first half of the programme to three great German composers Bach, Beethoven and Schumann.

Beethoven's Waldstein Piano Sonata is considered one of his epic musical artworks, composed during his bold middle period of the early 19th century. The composer's daring imagination in idea, sound and technique can be found in this notable sonata. In Ji-Yong's rendition, he drew the audience's attention to his limitless and effortless technique. His tone had a wide range, from soft and delicate to powerful and abrupt.



Ji-Yong, *pianist*

Bangkok Post

October 30, 2012

Ji-Yong seemed to enjoy the beauty of the space and time between notes in the short slow section – especially his long notes, they were exquisite. Without any pause as Beethoven indicated, he deftly moved on to the finale. There were octave passages in a super-fast tempo, infamous for their difficulty.

Ji-Yong swiftly delivered them with a soft and light touch. His economical gesture was sufficient, and at times when playing he looked very relaxed, with a slightly stooped back. Not only the impeccable technique he amazingly demonstrated, Ji-Yong successfully offered his individual interpretation and persona through the music making.

To end the first half, he floated along in Schumann's set of 13 musical sketches of childhood's reminiscences, Kinderszenen or Scenes From Childhood, Opus 15. His playing covered a range of moods and spirit. The popular Traumerei was an awesomely beautiful dreamscape.

Presented in the second half was a collection of Chopin's popular piano pieces. Two nocturnes, the Ballade No.1 In G Minor, Opus 23 and the "Heroic" Polonaise, Opus 53 were enjoyable. The audience could feel Ji-Yong breathing along with his musical phrases and they were pleasing to the ears and definitely to the heart. He was very shy when he had to speak to the audience for Liszt's transcription of Schumann's song Widmung (Dedication).

The memorable evening ended with Ji-yong kindly giving autographs.