

Dr. Cheong Yew Choong

Institute of Music, UCSI University (Malaysia)

Biography

Cheong Yew Choong holds his Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctorate Degrees from West Virginia University (USA) under full scholarship and graduate assistantship. His teachers include Prof. Dr. Peter Amstutz and Prof. Dr. P'ng Tean Hwa. Despite hearing impairment, Yew Choong is a prizewinner of several competitions: Music Teachers National Association Collegiate Artist Piano Competition in the State of West Virginia (2002), WVU's Annual Young Artists Auditions (2003) and the VSA Arts's International Young Soloists Award (2007).

Among the highlights of solo performances are appearances at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington D.C., National Institutes of Health in Washington D.C., Thailand's First Mozart Piano Competition and Festival, the International Piano Festival by People with Disabilities in Osaka and Vienna, and KL Piano Gala Concerts. As an educator, Yew Choong has presented lecture-recitals, with a focus on historically informed performance practice, at the international conferences in Australia, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Thailand. Recently, he has been invited to serve as research review committee for Mahidol University College of Music (Thailand) and contributed an article in Mahidol Music Journal. Yew Choong has also been invited to give master classes and workshops in Indonesia and Thailand.

Yew Choong is currently Assistant Professor at Institute of Music, UCSI University in Kuala Lumpur. He has designed a range of Master's music courses, and teaching applied piano, piano literature, performance practice and music theory. He also serves as a research supervisor for both undergraduate and postgraduate research projects.

Topic Presented

Interpreting Rhythmic Assimilation of Dotted Rhythms to Triplets

Abstract

The meaning of dotted rhythm is universally accepted today to be the following: the dot written after the first note lengthens its value precisely by half, and the following note is precisely equal to the value of the dot. However, the performance practice of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries involved flexible alterations to notated dotted rhythms. Among the various forms of rhythmic alteration are overdotting, underdotting and triplet assimilation. This lecture recital focuses on the study of Baroque performance practice of triplet assimilation: the alignment of dotted rhythm with triplet in such a way that a dotted eighth and sixteenth are coincided with the first and third notes of an eighth-note triplet group, respectively. Considering the staggering discrepancies and inconsistencies of rhythmic notation in the piano literature from the seventeen through the early twentieth century, such simultaneous clash of dotted rhythms and triplets is incomplete and can never be realized precisely. Since the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, the question of how to perform such rhythmic clash has remained one of the most controversial issues among the performers and musicologists.

This lecture recital begins with a general inquiry into the Baroque performance practice of assimilating a dotted rhythm to a triplet through the analysis of manuscript sources, score editions and historical treatises. Several interpretative possibilities of triplet assimilation will be discussed and illustrated through comparisons of audio recordings and performance of musical excerpts, ranging from J.S. Bach to Debussy. The lecture recital will be concluded with a performance of "From foreign lands and people" from Schumann's Scenes from Childhood Op. 15.