

Dr. Koo Siaw-Sing

Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music (Singapore)

Biography

Dr. Siaw-Sing Koo has been teaching at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music in Singapore since 2006. He currently teaches Keyboard Studies and Social History of the Piano modules. Prior to that, he held teaching positions at the University of Oregon and Augustana College in Illinois where he taught piano and music theory.

Dr. Koo has performed at major cities in the United States and Asia. Since his performance of the Yellow River Piano Concerto with orchestra, he has been presenting a series of lecture-performances on the solo repertoire of Chinese piano music, which have been widely recognized at music conferences including Australasia Piano Pedagogy Conference, Music Teachers' Association of California Convention, Western Australia Piano Pedagogy Convention, Performers' Present Festival and Symposium, University of Malaya International Music Conference, and Singapore International Piano Pedagogy Symposium. Other notable lectures include his interpretation on Debussy's piano music presented at Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) Conference and Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

Dr. Koo was the former president of the Singapore Music Teachers' Association in which he organized the Seventh Singapore Performers' Festival for young musicians that comprised of performances, masterclasses, and workshops. His other professional commitments include adjudicating local and international music competitions.

Topic Presented

Album for the Young: The Piano Education of Robert Schumann

Abstract

When Robert Schumann's daughter reached an age suited to beginning piano studies, he was concerned with the poor quality of pedagogical piano music available to her. Instead of using dry, formidable technical exercises that were common of piano books in the nineteenth century, Schumann brought forth his Album for the Young—a book that illuminates the hearts of the young and transpires their imaginative world. The album was a great success because it satisfied the needs of middle class hausmusik. Ultimately, it revolutionized approaches and concepts in the area of piano education.

Selections of pieces from Album for the Young are often used in teaching young children. However, the work and pedagogical philosophy behind it has often been overlooked. Thus, this lecture-recital will discuss the Album's significance from social-historical perspectives, and will examine its overall development and design. This research also evaluates Schumann's didactic principles and concepts which have greatly impacted piano education for over two centuries. A thorough study into its value in pedagogy is crucial to maximizing our effectiveness in piano education for young children.