

Ariel Mo
piano

Recital in partial fulfillment of the
Graduate Diploma, 2024
Student of Alessio Bax and Pavel Nersessian

with
Annie SeEun Hyung, cello

Monday, April 29, 2024
8:00 p.m.
Brown Hall

PROGRAM

Franz Schubert
(1797–1828)

Piano Sonata in A Minor, D 784 posth op. 143
Allegro giusto
Andante
Allegro vivace

Gerard Pesson
(b. 1958)

from *Vexierbilder II*
I. Speech of clouds

Dongryul Lee
(b. 1978)

*On a winter's night a traveler:
The Deeply Learned Klavier*

Intermission

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873–1943)

Sonata in G Minor for Cello and Piano, op. 19
Lento – Allegro moderato
Allegro scherzando
Andante
Allegro mosso

Annie SeEun Hyung, cello

One word suffices to describe the fourth movement of the Rachmaninoff: joy.

Joyous celebration, unfettered fanfare, glorious relief and in the middle of it all, moments of more tenderhearted intensity, crying from happiness because—as Mr. Lesser put it in a coaching for us last week—you can't believe how lucky you are to have made it here at last.

For me the here is now, tonight and all of the last few months, eight years on since I first arrived in Boston; three degrees, five teachers, and an uncountable number of mentors and friends later; how lucky am I to know you all.

Thank you.

Lee *On a winter's night a traveler: the Deeply Learned Klavier*

In 2022, I embarked on a new phase of my research on Computer Music, in the field of Artificial Intelligence. For over two months, I experimented with neural network codes to teach the computer around 110 piano compositions written by Mozart, then allowed it to generate its own fresh compositions. The computer's attempts were generally pastiche pieces reminiscent of Mozart's style, or (at best) aimed to counterfeit Mozart's works; nonetheless, there remained certain features that we can often find in the tonal music repertoire, such as ambiguous tonalities, diatonic scales and modes, repetitions, and patterns of chords and arpeggios, though often realized in crude, rudimentary, or even anticontrapuntal, artificial (of course) and mechanistic ways, in distorted and grotesque shapes.

For about a month I listened to these outputs, and began tracing the trajectories of the computer's unfulfilled thoughts. I was almost an archeologist who discovered a pile of unfinished, improvisatory, spurious sketches written by an unknown composer or had been misattributed to Mozart's virtual clumsy pupil, if more accurately described. During the discovery process, I tried to reveal the computer's intentions, develop the machine's imagination, and transform and elevate it into my own artwork.

This piece was commissioned by and dedicated with admiration and gratitude to Ariel Mo, who beautifully world premiered my *Le Tombeau de Harvey* in January 2022.

About the title

While I cannot logically elucidate the precise connection between this process and Calvino's *If on a winter's night a traveler*, I pondered Calvino's novel composed of two or three distinct dimensions: one housing the protagonist, and another enfolding the "inner book stories". These stories are composed of multiple episodes scripted by unproven or spurious authors. In the context of my creative process, I contemplated my existence as corresponding to the protagonist's role, while each distinct machine-generated musical piece was an independent world or narrative. An alternative interpretation could posit that these machine-generated compositions establish a continuous real-time background world due to their evolutionary nature. In this view, my interpolations or (hu)man-made parts could be likened to brief episodes, composed quasi-independently in accordance with those machine-generated renderings.

The original novel also introduces the existence of real/fake authors for these short episodes, such as "Cimmerian" or "Cimbrian," among others. In this context, Mozart might be positioned as one of these nearly forgotten (real/fake) authors. Analogous to the novel's authors, the genuineness, validity, and even the existence of these creators remain uncertain, existing in the thin spaces between binary data. They might be questionable, misattributed, or fakes—akin to the way this deep-learned Mozart cannot be verified as real or provide evidence for whether a genuine Mozart's ideas could be represented in such a manner.

– Dongryul Lee

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