

MEDIA RELEASE

Joyce Yang: irrepressible, unmissable brilliance

'Astonishing' GRAMMY-nominated pianist tours masterworks for Musica Viva



'Astonishing virtuoso with tremendous suggestive power.' – **Neue Zürcher Zeitung**

'The standout was Joyce Yang,' proclaimed the *New York Times* after a 'knockout' debut with the New York Philharmonic that marked the start of a stellar career. From **5 to 28 July 2018**, the GRAMMY-nominated pianist embarks on her **first full national tour for Musica Viva** – an unmissable chance to hear her brilliant take on great masterworks in two programs of **Grieg, Debussy, Chopin and Schumann** or **Rachmaninoff, Janáček and Liszt**, each featuring a **world premiere by young Sydney composer, Elizabeth Younan**.

Joyce Yang is one of the leading pianists in the newest generation of virtuosi. The South Korean-born star, who shot to fame as the youngest contestant in the 2005 International Van Cliburn Competition, packs more than 80 events into a season. Concertos with the top orchestras of the world, chamber music, recording, adjudicating and recitals, you name it... Her huge repertoire and infectious energy has in the last six months taken her to New Zealand for Rachmaninoff, Vancouver for Bernstein and Hawaii for Grieg, to Germany and Spain and all over North America. And now it's time to visit Australia.

This time, however, presents a special challenge: her first tour for Musica Viva Australia involves two different programs, nine different pieces, 12 solo appearances in just 14 days. This is extreme music-making, and not just because it's busy. The solo recital is uniquely demanding.

"It's a soliloquy that reveals absolutely everything about a pianist," she says, speaking on the phone from her home in New York. "When I play a recital, I meet sides of me that I didn't know existed. It's truly like all the different sides of you come out and play. It's just you on stage and no outside force, just whatever energy you pick up from the audience."

The two programs have very different energies, she explains. Both include a world premiere, Elizabeth Younan's first Piano Sonata, which was commissioned for the tour by Julian Burnside AO QC. Late last year, the young Australian composer met with Joyce for an animated discussion about the possibilities of the piano, and she's looking forward to exploring the results from this kindred spirit.

"Joyce is so passionate and vivacious, and she's wholly dedicated to her art," says Elizabeth. "She communicates every gesture of the music with every fibre of her being. It's just so inspiring to see." Younan's own accomplishments are nothing to sneeze at: a Sydney Conservatorium graduate with First Class Honours, she has just won a coveted place at the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia to further her composition studies.

Joyce describes the first program of Grieg, Debussy, Chopin and Schumann as having a sense of optimism, of lightness. "Whereas with the second program – Rachmaninoff, Janáček and Liszt – there are much more dark, vivid hues, a lot of

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drama and nostalgia. In my mind these works occupy darker colours, with many jewelled tones, different shades of shadows. There is a dangerous spirit to the second program.”

“As a performer, you want to be a messenger for this great music,” she explains. “Your success is defined by whether what you’re doing can leap across the stage and reach people.”



Born in 1986 in Seoul, Joyce received her first piano lesson from her aunt at the age of four. By ten, she had entered the School of Music at the Korea National University of Arts, later moving to the United States to join the pre-college division of the Juilliard School. After winning the Philadelphia Orchestra’s Greenfield Student Competition, she performed Prokofiev’s Third Piano Concerto with that orchestra at just twelve years old. She made her celebrated New York Philharmonic debut with Lorin Maazel in 2006 and performed on the orchestra’s tour of Asia, making a triumphant return to her hometown of Seoul. More recently, she is the recipient of an Avery Fischer Career Grant and received her first GRAMMY nomination in 2017 for a chamber music recording with violinist Augustin Hadelich.

Joyce’s stellar success is no grounds for complacency. “Getting ready for a performance is always a challenge,” she says. “No matter how many times you perform, it never seems to get easy, at least for me. There are a lot of what-ifs. You might have practised a lot and you might know these pieces inside out, but when you have thousands of people in front of you listening to everything that you’re doing, and they can hear even a pin drop, or your breath, or your beating heart, it’s really quite nerve-racking.”

Joyce Yang will tour to Adelaide, Newcastle, Sydney, Perth, Melbourne, Canberra, Coffs Harbour, Bermagui and Hobart. For bookings and further details, please visit www.musicaviva.com.au/yang.

She will also mentor talented students at a masterclass in Adelaide on 9 July and in Perth on 18 July. Members of the public are welcome to attend. For details, please see www.musicaviva.com.au/masterclasses.¹

JOYCE YANG, PIANO

TOUR DATES

Adelaide 10 Jul 2018 7:30 PM
Newcastle 12 Jul 2018 7:30 PM
Sydney 14 Jul 2018 2:00 PM
Perth 19 Jul 2018 7:30 PM
Sydney 23 Jul 2018 7:00 PM
Melbourne 24 Jul 2018 7:00 PM
Canberra 26 Jul 2018 7:00 PM
Melbourne 28 Jul 2018 7:00 PM

REGIONAL CONCERTS

Coffs Harbour 5 July 2018 8:00 PM²
Bermagui 7 July 2018 1:00 PM³
Hobart 21 July 2018⁴

VENUES

Adelaide: **Adelaide Town Hall**
Canberra: **Llewellyn Hall**
Melbourne: **Melbourne Recital Centre**
Newcastle: **Newcastle Conservatorium**
Perth: **Perth Concert Hall**
Sydney: **City Recital Hall**

PROGRAM ONE

(Adelaide, Sydney Weekend, Perth, Melbourne Weekday)
GRIEG Five Lyric Pieces
DEBUSSY *Estampes*
CHOPIN *Andante spianato et Grande polonaise brillante*, op 22
Elizabeth **YOUNAN** Piano Sonata*
SCHUMANN *Carnaval*, op 9

PROGRAM TWO

(Newcastle, Sydney Weekday, Canberra, Melbourne Weekend)
RACHMANINOFF Three Preludes
JANÁČEK Piano Sonata *1.X.1905*
LISZT *Spanish Rhapsody*
Elizabeth **YOUNAN** Piano Sonata*
LISZT Sonata in B minor

**Commissioned for Musica Viva by Julian Burnside AO QC*

¹Musica Viva’s Masterclass program is supported by principal patrons Stephen Johns & Michele Bender, the Sydney Conservatorium Association (NSW), Lyn Hamill & Ian Dover (Queensland), Wesfarmers Arts (Western Australia), Anonymous Donor (South Australia), and the late Mary Turner OAM (Newcastle).

²Coffs Harbour concert presented in association with Coffs Harbour Music Society. Bookings: www.coffsmusicsociety.com.au.

³Bermagui concert presented in association with Four Winds. Bookings: www.fourwinds.com.au.

⁴Hobart concert presented in association with Musica Viva Tasmania. Bookings: www.mvt.org.au.