

From Theory to Action: Concert Programming Strategies for Clara Wieck-Schumann's Piano Sonata in G minor (1841-42)

Clara Wieck-Schumann's Piano Sonata in G minor (1841-42) presents a confluence of conflicting trajectories. Published 150 years after its composition, it belongs to a large-scale genre regarded as 'masculine', 'intellectual', and 'transcendental' (Citron, 2000). A professional woman socialised into a male-dominated culture, Wieck-Schumann attracts studies reflecting two centuries of entangled gender, national, and social class ideologies. Posthumous reception evolved from recognising her as a woman achiever, to re-assessing her self-ambivalence and focusing on her creative individuality (Reich, 2001; de Vries, 1996). The few studies of her Sonata focus on evaluation (Selmon, 2010), amidst broader discourse on the positioning of women composers in the musical canon. However, scholars have focused on philosophy (or musicological considerations) rather than action. As classical music institutions address issues of privilege and representation, a better understanding of the reasons and processes behind concert programming is necessary to achieve meaningful inclusivity.

My main study, an autoethnographic experiment, situates Wieck-Schumann's Sonata within four concert programmes. Informed by my literature and methodological reviews, I vary the parameters of genre, style, gender, race, class and nationality these programmes may be seen to represent. My autoethnography examines how my attitudes towards the Sonata can influence my decisions in concert programming and repertoire selection, and the meaning-making that results from each programme design, audience engagement, and the performer's phenomenological experience.

To achieve wider applicability with my autoethnographic findings, I position my individual experience within my musical network. In Study 2, I conduct interviews with several conservatoire-based piano professors and postgraduates experienced in performing non-canonical repertoire. This qualitative study examines the pianists' motivations and processes towards their selection, interpretation and concert programming of non-canonical repertoire. I will integrate my findings from both studies to reflect the dynamism of real-world negotiations of musical value, draw links between our programming strategies and broader patterns of canon transformation, and address the performer's role within these transformations. Ultimately, the broad concepts that emerge can offer insights on how we can approach and present the partly familiar and unfamiliar.



Ning Hui See

Royal College of Music, London, United Kingdom

ning.see@rcm.ac.uk

Ning Hui See is a Singapore-born, London-based pianist and researcher. Her doctoral research at the Royal College of Music – 'Concert Programming Strategies: Clara Wieck-Schumann's Piano Sonata' – examines issues of gender, concert programming, and the Western classical musical canon. Ning Hui is passionate about practical strategies towards the meaningful integration of lesser-known repertoire. She is a CH Scholar supervised by Dr Natasha Loges and Danny Driver and is a Graduate Teaching Assistant for historical studies. Ning Hui has presented at the Institute of Austrian and German Music Research Conference (2021), the RMA-BFE Research

Students Conference, and the Gender and Musicianship Study Days (Helsinki). She gave the Singapore

premiere of Wieck-Schumann's Sonata at the Esplanade in 2018. Ning Hui has brought Wieck-Schumann's music to numerous venues including the Austrian Cultural Forum, St James Piccadilly in London and the Danube Palace in Budapest.

I am a doctoral student and wish to participate in a facilitated session with respondent.