

MENGJIAO YAN (UK)

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Classical pianist Mengjiao Yan began to play the piano at the age of six, and attended a middle school affiliated with the Central Conservatory of Music in China before she studied in the UK. She graduated from the Royal College of Music and studied piano performance with Prof. Andrew Ball and Prof. Ruth Nye. She then commenced her doctoral research on Igor Stravinsky's piano works in the Music Department of the University of Sheffield in 2015 under the supervision of Prof. George Nicholson. During her studies, she continued to have piano lessons with concert pianist Benjamin Firth and teaches Musical Materials and Counterpoint modules in her department. Mengjiao has given performances throughout North America, China, UK, France and Switzerland. Her particular interest is in 20th century Russian piano music and she intends to publish a book on Stravinsky's piano music in 2020.

How performers can approach the piano work of Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971): Interpretation and approaches to his three distinct period piano works

This presentation focuses on the piano works of Igor Stravinsky. It examines to three distinct time periods which influenced his works and compositional process. The aims are to provide an informed approach to his piano works, which are generally considered difficult and challenging piece to perform convincingly, and also help performers fully understand his works. It also explores aspects of freedom in interpreting his works and how to approach the notated scores. The participants are carefully selected professional pianists who are considered experts in their field and authorities on Stravinsky's piano works. The data analysis revealed a considerable amount of in-depth, rich data relating directly to the study's research questions. The finding show that the informants tend to offer differing and subtle approaches to their interpretations of Stravinsky's piano music. A number of new themes have emerged from the data analysis as well as the identification of certain aspects of Stravinsky's works which do not appear in the current literature on his piano works. The study has found a number of pertinent aspects relating to interpreting Stravinsky's piano works. The researcher has been able to obtain interesting perspectives related to aspects of freedom in regard to interpreting Stravinsky's piano works.