

SUNYONG HWANG (USA/ SOUTH KOREA)

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Pianist Sunyong Hwang holds a Bachelor of Music in piano performance from Chun-Ang University in South Korea, a Master of Music in piano performance from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, and a Doctor of Musical Arts in piano pedagogy from Texas Tech University. She is an instructor of Class Piano, Piano Ensemble, and Applied Piano at The University of Texas Permian Basin. Dr. Hwang won several piano competitions and was a prize winner of the Chun Cheon Si Piano Competition and the Gang Won Do Music Competition in her native Korea. She won the University of Hawai'i at Manoa Concerto Competition and performed in the Stravinsky Concerto for Piano and Winds with the UH Symphony Orchestra in 2013. While pursuing her doctoral degree at TTU, she conducted group class piano and taught private piano lessons for undergraduate students. As an active solo and collaborative piano performer, Dr. Hwang embraces a wide repertoire of styles for solo piano work and chamber work.

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Crafting a personal interpretation of Chopin's Mazurkas

Chopin's mazurkas have long interested me and have raised my curiosity enough to ask a few questions. Technically and pianistically, it seems pretty easy to play Mazurkas but why can't I feel any excitement when I'm playing these short pieces? I finally realized that issues of interpretation can (1) cause a lack of understanding about this music and at the same time (2) open up a wealth of different possibilities for stylistic performances. Fryderyk Chopin (1810-1849), one of the great composers for the piano in the Romantic era, composed almost 57 Mazurkas between 1825 and 1849. As shown by these dates, Chopin composed this miniature dance music throughout his whole life. Mazurkas are Polish folk dances and folk music. The original folk mazurka is a combination of three dances: Kujawiak, Mazur, Oberek. Chopin's mazurkas were very popular dance music as salon music and Chopin raised its level to an art form. The basic characteristics of the mazurka of Chopin include dotted rhythms, triplets, stylized ornaments, modal scales, and bagpipe drone. Chopin took this basic template of the mazurka and elevated it by introducing feelings which can include joy and sadness, melancholy and nostalgia and passion. In this presentation, I will explore How pianists can create such different tasteful and stylistic performances without distorting the mazurka itself.

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