

Sinae Lee

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

Sonata in C Major, Op.1

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante (from an old German love song)
- III. Scherzo. Allegro molto e con fuoco
- IV. Finale. Allegro con fuoco - Presto non troppo ed agitato

ALBAN BERG (1885-1935)

Piano Sonata, Op.1

HENRI DUTILLEUX (b.1916)

Piano Sonata, Op.1

- I. Allegro con moto
- II. Lied
- III. Choral et Variations



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“As a performer, it is fascinating to bring together these three opus one sonatas for piano, spanning different eras, and embodying different forms, style, tempi, nuances and textures. It gives me a unique perspective on the way that these three major composers established their voices: I find in these sonatas the embryos of musical ideas that would grow to significance in their subsequent output.”

Sinae Lee



When a composer assigns his own opus numbers, as Brahms, Berg and Dutilleux did, the significance of the numbering ‘Opus 1’ shifts significantly from a rather dry notion of ‘earliest known work’ to the much richer sense of arrival: ‘This’, the composer seems to say in marking his Opus 1, ‘is the first work that reflects who I am as an artist; this is the first work you should consider significant’.

It is perhaps surprising, given the general popularity of the piano and its relative accessibility for burgeoning composers, that so few have chosen a piano sonata to announce their first maturity as a composer. Nonetheless, that is what Brahms, Berg and Dutilleux each did, albeit in very different circumstances.

Brahms *Sonata in C Major, Op.1 (1853)*

The best known of the three works on today’s programme, this Sonata was assigned the Opus 1 designation despite being the second of Brahms’s piano sonatas to be composed, because he considered it better. It was sent, with a letter of recommendation from Brahms’s mentor Schumann, to the publishers Breitkopf und Härtel, and became the young Brahms’s first published work.

The dramatic opening bars bear comparison with Beethoven’s *Hammerklavier* sonata (presaging, perhaps, the relationship between Brahms’s first Symphony and Beethoven’s ninth) and the elegantly conceived structure is closely modeled on existing forms. The folk song on which the second movement theme is based is *Verstohlen geht der Mond auf (Stealthily rises the moon)*.

Berg *Piano Sonata, Op.1 (pub. 1910)*

The designation Opus 1 is doubly significant here - partly because Berg had composed so much music before the Sonata (mostly songs, but also other forms), and also because it is the only piano work to which he gave an opus number. The decision to assign the number seems to reflect its importance as the first work in a more individual style: the Sonata was the subject of considerable discussion between Berg and his teacher, Arnold Schoenberg, and its radical one-movement form was reputedly the result of Schoenberg’s telling Berg that he need not worry about material for subsequent movements because he had ‘said all there is to say’ in just one.

Toying with the conventional expectations of form, and subverting the ‘working out’ of serial structures, became an important expressive device in Berg’s later music - the ravishing Violin Concerto of 1935 being the best example: the concerto uses a twelve note row and the processes of serialism, and yet ends on a serene B-flat major chord with added sixth.

Dutilleux
Piano Sonata, Op.1 (1948)

'It comes from a period when I was busy trying to find my own voice'

Henri Dutilleux

Henri Dutilleux now considers the Piano Sonata Opus 1 as his first work to escape the heavy influences of predecessors and represent an individual style; it was composed in the early days of his 60-year marriage to the pianist Geneviève Joy, for whom it was written and to whom it is dedicated. In three movements, the final movement is a spectacular set of four variations on a theme, which has been described as a sonata-within-a-sonata.

In the sonata, the careful development of structural ideas in a sensuous sound-world of mostly modal harmonies reflects Dutilleux's later preoccupations in orchestral works such as *Métaboles* (1964).

On 22 January, Henri Dutilleux will celebrate his 97th birthday.

South Korean-born **Sinae Lee** leads a busy life as a soloist, chamber musician and lecturer based in Glasgow, UK. Since her UK début with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO), playing Brahms *Piano Concerto No.1*, she has also played with the Korean Symphony Orchestra, St. James Orchestra, Glasgow Orchestral Society, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) Wind Ensemble and Orchestra. She has frequently appeared in concerts in New York, St. Petersburg, Riga, London, Edinburgh and Glasgow as well as in her native cities in Korea such as Seoul, Suwon and Busan.

In Korea, she studied piano at Yewon School and Seoul Arts High School. After graduating Seoul National University with Distinction, Sinae was offered a place to study at the RCS with a full scholarship awarded by the Inches Carr Trust. A year later she obtained MMus with Distinction. While studying in Seoul, she won many prestigious prizes, such as the Chung-Ang Daily Newspaper competition, and the Korean Music Association for Overseas competitors. Her prizewinning career had continued in UK where she won the London Intercollegiate Beethoven competition as well as numerous RCS Prizes including the A Ramsay-Calder Debussy Prize, Bach Prize, Governors' Recital Prize, Concerto Competition, Ian D Watt Award and the Dunbar-Geber Prize.

In 2006, Sinae recorded Karol Szymanowski's complete piano works on 4 CDs, released by Divine Art Record Company. These recordings mark the first complete CD set in the world, containing the late published Prelude in C sharp minor, and has received highly acclaimed reviews. Some of the pieces from her Szymanowski CDs have been broadcasted on BBC Radio 3, Radio New Zealand and Busan KBS TV.

Between June and July 2011, she performed the entire series of the *Années de pèlerinage* by Liszt in the UK and in Korea, celebrating the 200 anniversary of his birth. The studio recording of this repertoire was released by Nimbus Alliance in July 2012 and was described as 'phenomenal' by the *Classical Reviewer*. Sinae also has been in demand for prize adjudications, including the Yamaha Music Foundation of Europe Piano Scholarships at Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM), A Ramsay-Calder Debussy Prize and Walcer Prize at the RCS. Sinae studied piano with Hwa-Young Yi, Hyoung-Joon Chang in Korea and Philip Jenkins in UK. Since 2001, Sinae has been teaching piano as a Lecturer in the department of Keyboard and Collaborative Piano at the Conservatoire.