

MAGAZINE

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Miyabi Haseo

The 10-year-old Grad Prix winner of the 10th Piano Competition Online

Peiyao Shan

“Forging a close connection between myself and the composer.”

Tiziano Mazzoleni

“This instrument has allowed me to turn my passion into a profession”

Diego López

“From a very young age I have known that music was my life and I wanted to live for music.”

Lorenzo Lionello

What is his composition process, and does being a saxophonist add to it?

“Every challenge is an opportunity for growth.

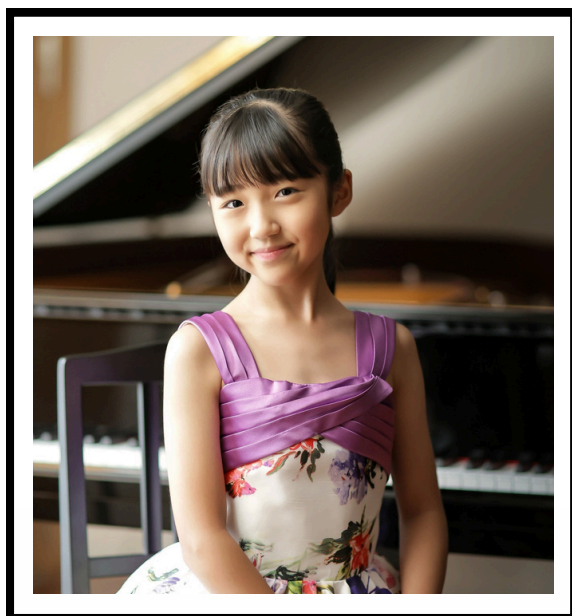
Every difficult passage is a chance to understand myself and the music more deeply.”

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EVERETT LEIGH

PIANIST OF THE YEAR 2024

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Miyabi Haseo

Miyabi Haseo was born on February 5th 2014 in Tokyo and began learning piano at age three, making her concerto debut at age eight. She studied piano with Ms. Yuka Matsuyama and Prof. Gen Matsuyama from age seven. She has won a number of competitions, such as Osaka International Music Competition 2022 (First Prize), Japan Player's Competition 2022 (First Prize), Japan Classical Music Competition 2022 (First Prize), Junior Classical Music Competition in Japan 43rd 2022 (First Prize), and 24th VALSESIA MUSICA Juniores International Competition 2023 (First Prize). This spring she made her debut at Carnegie Hall, New York.



How did it happen that you started playing the piano?

When I turned 3 yrs old, I started it at my mother's recommendation. I was so happy and excited that I didn't want to stop practicing piano.

What is your typical day like? How do you manage to balance school and practicing?

In the mornings, when I feel most energetic, I practice the piano for 2 hours before going to

school. After returning home, I practice the piano again, finish my school homework, and then go to bed.

What was the most challenging piece you played and why?

When I was 8 yrs old, I performed Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 27. Playing numerous arpeggios with my small hands was challenging, and coordinating with the orchestra's timing was also very difficult.

Who is your favorite composer/s and why?

Kabalevsky: Piano Concerto No. 3, Op. 50
It feels like a fantastical story with a variety of worlds to explore, which made it exciting and enjoyable for me.

What are your feelings when you perform on stage and share your music with an audience?

"I would like to share the brilliance of this piece for the audience."

What are your biggest dreams for the future?

I aspire to be a pianist capable of creating truly unique and irreplaceable expressions.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I love to take a break and refresh by moving my body through swimming.

How do you celebrate your musical achievements?

I reward myself by going on trips, visiting Disneyland, or dining out at restaurants.

When practicing a new piece, how do you approach the process of bringing it to life?

I imagine what the composer intended to convey from the piece of music, giving entirely in the world of the piece.

Would you recommend other young pianists to participate in Piano Competition Online?

Yes! Because there's a special joy in it, so many people listen to my performance.

“I aspire to be a pianist capable of creating truly unique and irreplaceable expressions.”



Everett Leigh

Pianist of the Season at the 7th Edition of the Ad Libitum International Piano Competition and Pianist of the Year 2024 at the Ad Libitum IPC

You are already an experienced pianist at a young age. Tell us about your greatest playing experience.

There's a moment in every musician's life when music transcends mere performance and becomes something profoundly spiritual. For me, that moment crystallized with Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto.

When I first approached this monumental piece, I wasn't just preparing for a performance— I was embarking on an intimate conversation with the music

itself. The Third Concerto isn't just a composition; it's a living, breathing entity that demands everything from you. Its complex passages are like intricate emotional landscapes, each note a brushstroke of raw human experience.

As I sat at the piano with the orchestra surrounding me, something magical happened. The world around me began to dissolve. The concert hall, the audience, my own self— everything faded into the background. There was only the music. My fingers seemed to move with a life of their own,

channeling emotions deeper than words could ever express. Rachmaninoff's masterpiece speaks a language of passion, struggle, and ultimately, hope.

In those moments, I wasn't just playing the concerto—the concerto was playing me. Each crescendo felt like a heartbeat, each delicate passage a whispered secret. I lost track of time, of space, of everything except the pure, overwhelming sensation of music flowing through me. It was as if I had become a conduit for something much larger than myself.

This piece has always been close to my heart. Its complexity mirrors the complexity of human emotions — the way we struggle, love, hurt, and ultimately triumph. My professor said that when I play this piece, I look like someone who is 75 years old and has been through all my life already. When I play the Third Concerto, I'm not just performing. I'm telling a story of the human spirit, of resilience, of the indescribable beauty that exists in our deepest moments of vulnerability.



**What is your typical day like?
How do you manage to balance
school and playing?**

Balance? Sometimes I think that word is just a beautiful myth musicians tell themselves. My life is a constant, passionate dance between academic challenges and musical dedication.

My days are a whirlwind of intensity. I'm navigating six honor classes and two AP courses, juggling the responsibilities of student government and running a social entrepreneurship program at school. This coming week, my history final alone requires me to study a 200-page guide. It sounds overwhelming, and truthfully, sometimes it is.

But here's the secret: piano is my anchor. No matter how chaotic life becomes, I have a non-negotiable commitment to my practice. Every single day, before diving into homework or tackling school projects, I sit at my piano. Those practice hours aren't just about technical perfection—they're my meditation, my way of processing the world.

My typical day is a carefully choreographed routine. School from 8:45 to 3:30, then a kaleidoscope of activities—piano lessons, language classes, swimming, recording sessions. Between 7 and 10 PM, I'm fully immersed in piano practice. And when the world goes quiet, from 10 PM to 1 AM, I study. I commit about 6 hours of

practice on the weekend no matter what happens.

It's exhausting. It's exhilarating. It's m in y life. Sometimes, I catch myself admiring the journeys of other young pianists who attend schools with more flexible academic schedules, allowing them more freedom to travel and perform. Their seemingly less demanding educational path can appear enviable, offering more space for musical pursuits. Yet, I've learned that every path has its own unique challenges and opportunities

Some might see this schedule and think it's impossible. But for me, it's about passion. Each challenge is an opportunity. Every late night of studying, every intense practice session, is a step towards my dreams. Music and education aren't competing priorities—they're complementary parts of my journey.

**You have experienced what it
is like to be a concert pianist.
What do you like about this
profession? And what
disadvantages does it have in
your opinion?**

Passion isn't a choice—it's a calling. For me, being a concert pianist isn't just a profession; it's the very air I breathe.

Who wouldn't want to transform their deepest passion into their life's work? Every time I sit at the piano, I'm not just performing—I'm communicating a language more profound than words. Music is my way of understanding the world, of expressing emotions too complex for mere conversation.

But let's be real. This path isn't always a beautiful melody. It's demanding, sometimes brutally so. While my peers might be enjoying typical

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teenage experiences, I'm dedicating hours to perfecting a single phrase, understanding the nuanced emotion behind every note. The world of classical music requires absolute dedication.

Right now, I'm not focused on the potential disadvantages. Instead, I'm completely absorbed in learning, in refining my musicianship. Every challenge is an opportunity for growth. Every difficult passage is a chance to understand myself and the music more deeply.

My goal isn't just to play perfectly—it's to touch hearts. To create moments of genuine connection through music. In a world that often feels fragmented, music has the power to remind us of our shared humanity

**Do you have big stage fright?
How do you deal with it?**

Stage fright—it's a curious companion that has become increasingly familiar to me this year. As I've grown more accomplished, winning competitions and receiving more recognition, I've discovered that success isn't just about musical skill. It's also about navigating the complex emotional landscape of performance.

My journey with stage fright is still evolving. Each time I prepare to go on stage, I feel those familiar butterflies—the racing heart, the trembling hands, the momentary doubt. But my mother shared a

profound piece of wisdom that has become my anchor: 'We aren't competitors of anyone but ourselves.'

Those words changed everything for me. Suddenly, performance wasn't about perfection or impressing others. It became a personal journey of growth. It's okay to fall, to mess up, to be imperfect. What matters is that we get back up, that we learn, that we strive to be slightly better than we were last time.

I don't have a magic solution to stage fright. There's no switch I can flip to make the nerves disappear completely. But I've discovered something beautiful—the moment I start playing, something remarkable happens. The music becomes larger than my fears. The notes flow, and suddenly, I'm no longer thinking about the audience, the

competition, or my nervousness. I'm just... present. Completely absorbed in the music.

It's a reminder that our greatest strength often emerges from our moments of vulnerability. Stage fright isn't something to be conquered, but a part of the journey to be understood and embraced.

Each performance is a conversation—not just with the audience, but with myself. A chance to grow, to learn, to be a little braver than I was before."

What are your feelings about performing the 3rd Rachmaninoff concerto with the orchestra? (From question 1)

I've completed the entire Rachmaninoff Third Concerto, which makes it especially frustrating that most U.S.

"It's a reminder that our greatest strength often emerges from our moments of vulnerability. Stage fright isn't something to be conquered, but a part of the journey to be understood and embraced."



competitions only allow performers my age to play one movement. My greatest hope is to perform the whole piece one day, showcasing its complete musical journey.

Tell us about your role in the Opus music foundation? What does the foundation engage in?

My involvement with the Opus Music Foundation has been a transformative journey of growth, passion, and social impact. It began modestly during the pandemic, where I started as a note-taker for our backstage series. What started as a simple role quickly evolved into something much more meaningful.

During those challenging pandemic days, we pioneered online masterclasses, bringing

together renowned performers and professors to keep musical education alive. As the world reopened, we transitioned to on-stage series, creating the Pelican International Piano Competition - a platform that not only rewards talented young musicians but also provides them a prestigious performance opportunity at the Nixon Library.

My role expanded from event coordinator to vice president, and with that came incredible opportunities to make a real difference. One of our most meaningful initiatives has been partnering with Foster Love, the largest foster care organization in the United States. We've developed programs to provide piano lessons and concerts for children who might never have had the chance to experience music otherwise.

This work extends beyond my

role in the foundation. My school's social entrepreneurship club runs parallel initiatives, raising funds for various social causes. It's all connected by a simple belief I've held since childhood: the desire to be genuinely useful to my community.

Music, for me, has never been just about performing. It's about connection, about lifting others, about creating opportunities where none existed before. Through the Opus Music Foundation, I'm learning that true artistry isn't measured by the notes we play, but by the lives we touch and the hope we create.

What are your wishes for next year?

I've got a lot of wishes for next year! I'm hoping to do well in some competitions and finally get to perform my full Rachmaninoff 3rd Concerto. Fingers crossed I can get a scholarship to go back to Europe for a summer music festival. I'm working on this cool science research about stem cells at school, and I really want that to go smoothly. Oh, and I really hope my grandparents can come visit us soon. It would be awesome to see them!

What do you like to do in your free time (except music)?

Besides music? I've got a bunch of cool interests! I'm actually a competitive swimmer—I've been on a team since I was 5, so swimming is basically like a second language to me.

I'm a total Pokemon nerd. Ask me anything about Pokemon, and I can probably name pretty much every single one of them! It's kind of my secret superpower.

Would you recommend other young pianists to participate in the Ad Libitum Piano Competition?

Absolutely, I'd totally recommend the Ad Libitum Piano Competition to other young pianists! What makes this competition special is the incredible panel of judges—they're not just random people, but real heavy-hitters in the classical music world. We're

talking about judges who are deeply connected to mainstream classical music, respected performers and educators who truly understand what it means to be a young musician.

But here's the really cool part—this competition isn't just about playing perfectly. It's about sharing your story. They give young pianists like me a platform to showcase not just our musical talents, but our entire journey. This interview is a perfect example! They want to hear about who we are, what drives us, what our dreams are.

I'm super grateful to Ad Libitum for giving me this chance to speak to the world. It's more than a competition—it's an opportunity to be heard, to connect, to share something real beyond just the notes on a page. For any young pianist wondering if they should participate, my answer is a definite YES!



Tiziano Mazzoleni

Tell us how it came about that you started playing the trombone? What do you like most about the instrument?

When I am asked this question, I typically answer with another question: 'Why do you like pizza?' You try it for the first time and fall in love with it. This is somewhat what happened to me. However, my greatest fortune lies in having a family that has always supported me and encouraged me to pursue my dreams, which has played a crucial and fundamental role in my educational journey and beyond.

It all began when I was five years old, with my mother giving me piano lessons and watching concerts on television. It was there that I became fascinated

with the French horn. Consequently, my parents enrolled me in a music school, but being too small and delicate for the weight of the instrument, the teacher advised me to start with the trumpet, which I did. Several years later, during a class recital, I saw a trombone in person for the first time, and that is when the spark was ignited.

I changed instruments and studied with various teachers. Through ups and downs in my studies and more than a few difficulties, I gradually managed to reach my goals, and my passion kept growing—one that continues to grow stronger every day.

From a technical perspective, what I appreciate most about my instrument are its remarkable and versatile capabilities. It is an

instrument with a stunning sound, capable of producing a thousand different shades that can move people emotionally. However, what I value most is that this instrument has allowed me to turn my passion into a profession, enabling me to travel to many places and meet many wonderful people—people who, had I not pursued this path, would probably not be part of my life today.

What styles, eras, composers do you particularly enjoy playing? Which ones have you not yet explored?

If you had asked me this question a few years ago, I would have said Mahler; if you had asked me 15 years ago, it would have been



Beethoven. In both cases, probably music from the Romantic or Late Romantic period. But to be honest, at this point, I don't really know how to answer. Since moving to Germany almost seven years ago, I've developed a growing passion for contemporary music and started exploring a world I was completely unaware of until then. I can't say I prefer one thing over another because that would be untrue. I can only say that, at times, performing as an orchestral musician, compositions by great composers from the past—pieces that the audience finds wonderful to listen to—can actually be a bit boring to play, simply because the trombone doesn't have much to do in that particular piece. On the other hand, performing works like Mahler's 6th Symphony or Wagner's *Das Rheingold*, to name two examples, is a completely different experience.

As a soloist, I'd be thrilled to perform Ferdinand David's *Concertino*, and trombonists will understand this statement very well—it's the concerto that is almost always required in orchestral auditions. Last but not least, there are composers whose works I haven't explored yet but would love to discover in greater depth. Among them, Luciano Berio and Iannis Xenakis stand out, especially their compositions written for solo trombone.

What are you planning to work on in the coming months?

I plan to continue sharing my passion for music and culture with my students, giving masterclasses while also pursuing my solo and chamber music career. Additionally, I am working on developing new and innovative projects and ideas that keep me very busy and extremely passionate.

Can you recall a memorable performance or musical moment that stands out in your musical journey?

When I played as soloist Nino Rota's trombone concerto with the orchestra I did my internship with. It was a unique thrill for me, my family came from Italy all the way to Cologne to attend the concert, but especially as an Italian to be able to play as a soloist a world-renowned Italian composer like Rota together with friends and colleagues and to be able to share this joy with them, is priceless.

What are your feelings when you perform on stage and share your music with an audience? What are your aspirations for your music career?

I would like to answer these two questions together because I believe they are, in a way, related to each other. For me, playing goes beyond simply reproducing the notes written on the score as sounds; it means emotions—the same emotions I experience when interpreting those notes on the page. To me, playing is happiness, passion, love, hate, anger, joy, and all the emotions and feelings that help me interpret the piece to the best of my ability.

Trying to convey a sense of joy or anger in a musical phrase so that the audience can feel what I feel, and have felt while interpreting the piece, and empathize with the artist—that, in my opinion, is our job. We should make the audience put themselves in our shoes, to

“If I am not the first to enjoy and be passionate about what I do, how can I expect others to do so through my interpretation?”

empathize with who we are and what our interpretation is. When we succeed in doing this, the emotions we feel are indescribable. The most beautiful thing about it all is that, through music, we can share all of this with others.

For me, at the base of everything is enjoyment. If I am not the first to enjoy and be passionate about what I do, how can I expect others to do so through my interpretation? When I am on stage and see the theater or arena sold out, I take all the energy the audience gives me and put it into what I am playing, because I love sharing my joy with every single person in the audience.

One thing that is very dear to me and that I have been working on for a few years now is a project to bring people of all ages closer to this fantastic instrument. Unfortunately, in popular culture, we are somewhat forgotten compared to other instruments that enjoy more fame. Therefore, what I am

really focusing on is trying to introduce all kinds of people to the trombone and its incredible sound.

Beside learning music, what are some of your favorite hobbies or activities? How do you spend your free time?

I like to spend my time in the best way possible so that I can balance music and private life. The things I am most passionate about are languages, I speak four of them: Italian, English, German and Spanish and slowly I am learning Japanese, and aviation, my secret dream is to be able to get my pilot's license one day.

What motivated you to participate in music competitions such as the Fenix Award International Music Competition? Would you recommend other musicians to participate in the competition?



I would like to begin with the second question: yes! I would recommend other musicians to take part in this and other competitions and the reason is related to the answer to the first question: what motivates me to participate in them? The drive to put myself out there. I am always looking for new challenges and motivations for myself, because my goal as a musician is to improve myself more and more every day. Music competitions are the best way to see whether I am going in the right direction or if I need to adjust the course a bit, and the excellent result I got at the Fenix Award International Music Competition, showed me that I am on the right path.





Diego López Ruiz

How did you get interested in playing the euphonium? What is your story?

I was interested in playing the euphonium because my grandfather played the tuba, and it has always been a musical reference for me.

Fortunately I come from a very rich family musically speaking, since my town "Llíria", a "UNESCO" city of music, has a musical history from 200 years ago.

I started playing euphonium at the age of 6, at the music school of my neighborhood band- the Banda Primitiva de Llíria- the oldest Spanish musical society in Spanish territory.

From a very young age I have known that music was my life and I wanted to live for music. So at the age of 11 I entered the Llíria conservatory already with several national euphonium awards behind me.

6 years later, and with several first national and international awards, I began studying at the "Superior Conservatory of Music Joaquín Rodrigo of Valencia", where I am currently studying for my first year of higher education.

Can you tell us about your favourite pieces of music or composers that you play on the euphonium and how they have influenced your style?

I consider myself a fairly open person to play different musical styles: from transcriptions of Bach's cello suites, to current contemporary pieces with effects and extended euphonium techniques that take this beautiful instrument to all its extremes.

One of the pieces that I most like to emphasize that I have played before and that has most marked me as an instrumentalist could be the "Euphonium concerto" by Vladimir Cosma. Due to its musicality and its grotesque Spanish character, it is one of the works that I have enjoyed the most when I interpreted it on different occasions.

Can you recall a memorable performance or moment related to music that stands out in your musical journey?

In the interpretative field, related to performances, one of

the performances that I remember with the most affection for what it meant and for whom I shared this performance, was my final degree recital of professional courses.

It was a day that will surely remain in my memory and that of the concert attendees: My family and friends.

On June 7, this performance was held in Llíria, and I shared the stage with my partner and good tube player friend "Samuel Hernandez" and with my best childhood friend, the percussionist "Javier Alamà".

That concert meant our farewell and last performance on that stage, with very demanding pieces, of different styles, character and emotions.

Without a doubt, a day to remember.

Looking ahead, what are your goals and aspirations as a musician? Are there any specific projects or milestones you are working on in your musical career?

For the future, my greatest long-term aspirations would be to win

international competitions, such as the Korean island of Jeju or the Lieksa Brass competition.

Right now I am working on future concerts as a soloist, the premiere of the play "L'ES-PAN-YA" by the Spanish composer David Rivas, and preparing the competitions of the "ITEC" and the "Concurs nacional de Tuba La Vila Joiosa".

All this is always from a point of view of enjoying music.

What are some of your non musical hobbies or activities? How do you spend your free time?

Right now I have left aside several non-musical hobbies that were part of my life before, such as soccer and the gym.

I distribute my free time right now by going out with my friends or my girlfriend, listening to classical music and studying for my driver's license.

What are your biggest dreams for the future?

My biggest dream musically speaking, is to be an international euphonium soloist, since I was little, seeing my references Bastien Baومت, Steven Mead, David Childs... I have dreamed of being an international soloist and being able to dedicate myself to music playing euphonium, since it is what I am most passionate about in life.

What has your participation in the Global Young Musicians competition given you? Would you recommend it to other musicians?

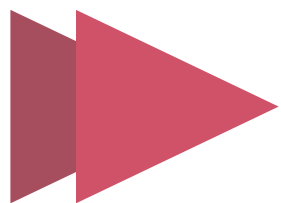
Participating in the Global Young Musicians contest has been a deeply enriching and transformative experience in my musical career. I got the first prize, a recognition that not only filled me with pride, but also allowed me to gain important prestige within the international sphere. This achievement has given me greater professional projection and has opened doors to new opportunities, both in the artistic and academic fields.

In addition, the experience of the contest itself was invaluable. Competing with talented musicians from different parts of the world allowed me to learn from their styles, techniques and ways of performing. This inspired me to continue improving and expanding my own musical horizon. The platform offered by this contest not only recognizes talent, but also

connects participants with a global network of artists and professionals, something I consider crucial to grow in the world of music.

I recommend all musicians, regardless of their level or stage of training, to present themselves in this contest. Not only because it is an opportunity to measure yourself with high-level artists, but also because it challenges you to bring out the best in yourself. Beyond the result, preparation and experience are extremely valuable. The possibility of obtaining a prize in a contest of this magnitude can mark a before and after in the career of any musician, as he did in mine.





Lorenzo Lionello

You are a composer at such a young age. Can you tell us how your passion for composing began and how it is developing now?

My current passion for composition began about a year ago, following a year of indecision about my future studies and many years spent exploring various musical genres and related activities. It was a period during which I was faced with several important choices regarding my future and career, including whether to enroll in the conservatory for saxophone, composition, or conducting.

Choosing to pursue composition as my academic field of study was a turning point. I began to study this wonderful subject more systematically, seeking beauty in every note, behind every phrase, and within each composition. I embarked on an in-depth exploration of composition, experimenting with new writing styles, exploring every timbral possibility, and discovering new forms of musical expression.

You are also a saxophonist. How does playing an instrument influence your compositional process?

Playing the saxophone and other wind instruments, and not only those, has a significant impact on my compositional process. My compositions for this instrument are primarily based on my skill level and my background as a student and performer, ranging from easy and accessible pieces to more advanced levels. However, they are always technically executable and cover

both classical and contemporary repertoire. I focus heavily on the expressive and musical aspects of my works.

Playing a wind instrument has led me to develop a meticulous precision in writing for the entire family of wind instruments, including both woodwinds and brass. My timbral research in composition is also based on practicing various instruments. In fact, I often test my compositions on



different instruments besides the saxophone, on which I can perform and sketch an execution.

This approach allows me to explore new types of writing, utilize every timbral possibility, and discover new forms of musical expression that are based on firsthand execution of these instruments. My practical experience with them enriches my compositional process, enabling me to create works that are technically precise and musically expressive.

Could you tell us about your creative process when you start a new composition?

All my compositions are organized and conceived

according to a compositional style I am developing, which I call "composition for soundscapes." This technique incorporates the use of all other existing compositional techniques and languages. It involves the use of classical structures or informal structures that do not rely solely on predetermined themes, such as a theme A and a theme B, but rather use a set of themes and melodies written in similar compositional styles, with similar or contrasting characteristics, representing the two themes or other parts of various forms.

There are various ways I approach a new composition or find inspiration. One approach involves opening a blank page and translating all my ideas and the sounds

swirling in my head into musical language, attempting to give them order and structure. Another source of inspiration comes from reading poetry, viewing paintings or landscapes, and listening to compositions by other authors. These elements often suggest new melodies, themes, or ideas for a new project.

Each idea is then developed according to two types of processes: in the first case, I organize the themes into a well-defined structure before developing the themes and melodies; in the second case, I let the ideas flow freely, creating the structure later and organizing them subsequently.



Do you have a preference for composing for a particular type of instrument or ensemble?

I love to vary in my compositions. I enjoy writing for chamber groups, choral formations of any kind, contemporary ensembles, educational ensembles, and even symphony and large orchestras. Each formation requires a different approach, allowing me to experiment with various compositional styles and techniques.

When writing for chamber groups, I focus on the intimacy and collaboration between musicians, leveraging the transparency and delicacy of timbres. Choral formations offer me the opportunity to explore rich harmonies and complex counterpoints thanks to the vocal variety. With contemporary ensembles, I can experiment with new sounds and technologies, pushing the boundaries of traditional music. Educational ensembles present an interesting challenge, as I need to balance musical complexity with the students' abilities, creating works that are both educational and enjoyable to play.

Finally, working with symphony and large orchestras allows me to explore the full orchestral range. I create dynamic compositions that maximize

the potential of each section of the orchestra, enabling me to produce works that are technically precise and musically expressive.

What are your plans for the future?

In my future, I would like to become a skilled musician, an important conductor, and a composer. In addition, I would like to be a good teacher, capable of imparting the best of myself to all my students. I want my knowledge to be transmitted in the purest way possible and to encourage students to

improve and to research, thus contributing to music. I wish to convey to everyone that music "is the only art that reaches the heart without even touching it, breaking down all barriers between people and uniting hearts."

I aspire to be a musician who can inspire others to push beyond their limits and be a source of inspiration for others. I hope to leave a mark in music, bringing about, in my own small way, a new revolution, as the great composers of the past did, and to be recognized for who I am and for what I write.

"I wish to convey to everyone that music "is the only art that reaches the heart without even touching it, breaking down all barriers between people and uniting hearts."

Peiyao Shan

What was your earliest experience of playing the piano and when you first decided to pursue a career as a pianist?

At the very beginning, my parents debated between the traditional Chinese instrument, the Guzheng, and the piano. The piano won, thanks to my father, who called it 'The King of All Instruments.' I was born in a small city in China, where we bought a piano and were introduced to my first piano teacher through a manager. Fortunately, I received a relatively formal education right from the start. My first teacher, a graduate of one of China's top conservatoires, had returned to teach in my hometown.

As a child, I often participated in competitions and vividly remember winning first prizes in each one at that time. My first teacher, along with competition judges, believed I had the potential to become a professional musician. They encouraged me to leave my province to pursue advanced training. In 2008, my mother took me to Beijing, where we found Professor Ling Yuan,

the former head of the piano department at the Central Conservatory of Music. Under her guidance, I began preparing for the entrance examination for the junior school affiliated with conservatoires. I practiced the piano for nine hours a day during that period— it felt like I was always at the piano, except when eating or sleeping. I am truly grateful to my parents, my teachers, and the younger version of myself for all the hard work.

Could you refer to other people who have been inspiring you on your musical path?

Every teacher in my musical journey has encouraged me immensely. My first teacher always believed in my potential to become a professional musician and introduced me to the head of the piano department at the Central Conservatory of Music. Professor Yuan Ling provided me with a solid foundation in piano and nurtured my musical sense and theoretical knowledge. She is a well-rounded educator, and I remember



that we always began our lessons with scales, sometimes spending half the class focusing solely on the sound and technique of the fingers!

In high school, my teacher, Galyna Popova, made an exception and accepted me as the only student in history to enter her class in the first year of junior high. She provided me with invaluable insights and teachings from the Russian school of piano.

During my time at the Royal College of Music, I had the privilege of studying with pianists Jianing Kong, Gordon Fergus-Thompson, and Caterina Grewe. They are all exceptionally rigorous teachers, and our lessons were incredibly efficient. Professor Jianing's research into music and technique is both profound and scientific,

and he helped me overcome many challenges at the Royal College of Music. Under his guidance, I successfully completed my bachelor, master's degree, and Artist Diploma in performance, while also participating in numerous prestigious international piano competitions. I am deeply grateful to all of them.

What are your feelings when you perform on stage and share your music with an audience?

I believe this is largely due to my years of stage experience. When I perform, I don't feel overly nervous; instead, I focus on enjoying every second at the piano and immersing myself completely in the music. I think this level of focus allows me to offer the audience the best possible musical experience and leave a lasting impression.

During my time in the junior school attached to the conservatoire, I used to overthink—worrying about what would happen if something went wrong with the piece or how the audience would perceive me if I made a mistake. Over time, I came to realize that these distractions only pulled me away from the essence of performing and added unnecessary stress.

I always find it exciting to

step on stage and share what I have learned with the audience. I also love engaging with them after the performance, hearing their thoughts and feelings, and using their reflections to inspire my next one.

How do you express yourself through your performances?

I hope that, while fully respecting the composer's intentions, I can also preserve and showcase my own individuality. Finding that balance is something I have always explored. In my performances, I strive to achieve a perfect balance, playing the music in a way that feels convincing and authentic to the audience. My goal is for my performance to deeply resonate with them.

In most cases, I start by researching the background of the piece—understanding the composer's experiences, emotional state, and life stage at the time of composition, as well as their musical style. Based on this, I try to craft a narrative that aligns with the composer's vision, while also integrating my own life experiences and emotions. This approach allows me to bring the music to life in a natural and vibrant way, forging a close connection between myself and the composer.



What are your aspirations for your music career?

I aspire to continue performing on larger international stages, gaining valuable experience through various competitions, and collaborating with diverse conductors and orchestras. Meeting exceptional musicians from around the world and expanding my repertoire by exploring works from a broader range of composers is also a goal of mine. I have a particular interest in lesser-known pieces, such as the Spanish works and Chinese compositions I had the privilege of performing at a Royal College of Music concert.

As someone who has recently graduated, my primary focus right now is to stay active on stage. More than anything, I want to keep performing and sharing my music with audiences.

What are your interests outside of music? What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

In my teenage years, I often spent my free time hanging out with friends and playing video games. In recent years, however, I've developed a love for reading, particularly books on psychology.

As I've progressed in my musical journey, I've come to realize that musicians often lead solitary lives. We spend countless hours practicing, and an entire day can pass with just me and the piano. Over time, I've grown to appreciate this quiet, immersive solitude, which also allows me to explore my inner self. Perhaps it's for this reason that I've developed a deep affection for reading.

What motivated you to participate in music competitions such as World's Best Musicians and Bach IMC?

I have always sought out professional and renowned competitions worldwide. The World's Best Musicians and Bach IMC are truly perfect platforms for me. Their outstanding panels and high standards have attracted many exceptional artists from diverse backgrounds. I believe these platforms serve as excellent starting points for building a musical career.

I hope that, while fully respecting the composer's intentions, I can also preserve and showcase my own individuality.



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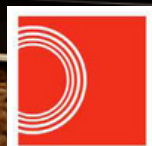


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