

# Take Five are unstoppable

Singapore chamber group thrill in their third recital of classical piano quintets

## review concert

### TAKE FIVE

Lim Yan, piano with members of the SSO Esplanade Recital Studio/Sunday

chang tou liang

**T**he chamber music scene in Singapore is really picking up and opportunities abound for local musicians to make history.

Take Five, a quintet formed by pianist Lim Yan with violinists Foo Say Ming and Lim Shue Churn, violist-for-the-evening Chan Yoong Han and cellist Chan Wei Shing, seem to relish doing that.

Their bold ambition is to perform all the piano quintets in the classical canon. Going through the four warhorses (Schumann, Brahms, Dvorak and Franck) one at a time, their third recital also showcased a rarely heard quintet and one by a local composer.

Kelly Tang's six-minute-long Quintet Of 1996 is a model of compactness and concentration.

Opening like a Second Viennese School product, his bitty motifs peppered the ear with sparks and shards of sound.



**Rousing music from (from left, clockwise) Lim Shue Churn, Foo Say Ming, Chan Yoong Han, Chan Wei Shing and Lim Yan. ST FILE PHOTO**

Melodic interest soon became discernable as an arch-like structure was formed, but it ended as the senses began to pique.

This is a work that will repay further visits.

The concert began with the early Dvorak Quintet In A Major (Op. 5), written before he became the distinctive voice of Czech nationalism.

Its dark-hued tones channelled Wagner, while folk-like rhythms made themselves felt, albeit without the heart-on-sleeve transparency of the mature

and familiar Quintet Op. 81, also in the same key.

The reading of the angst-filled slow movement and hot-blooded rush that is the scherzo-cum-finale was invigorating, making the work sound greater than initially suggested.

This self-same vehemence and sense of purpose continued well into the second half, where the mighty Brahms F Minor Quintet (Op. 34) awaited.

In the first movement's sonata form, white-hot playing on stage was matched only by the intensity etched on the faces of the performers.

The quintet could have afforded to relax a little in the slow movement's Andante, instead of sounding tense in parts. Perhaps that was an inevitable lead-up to the Scherzo's unstoppable march to the abyss.

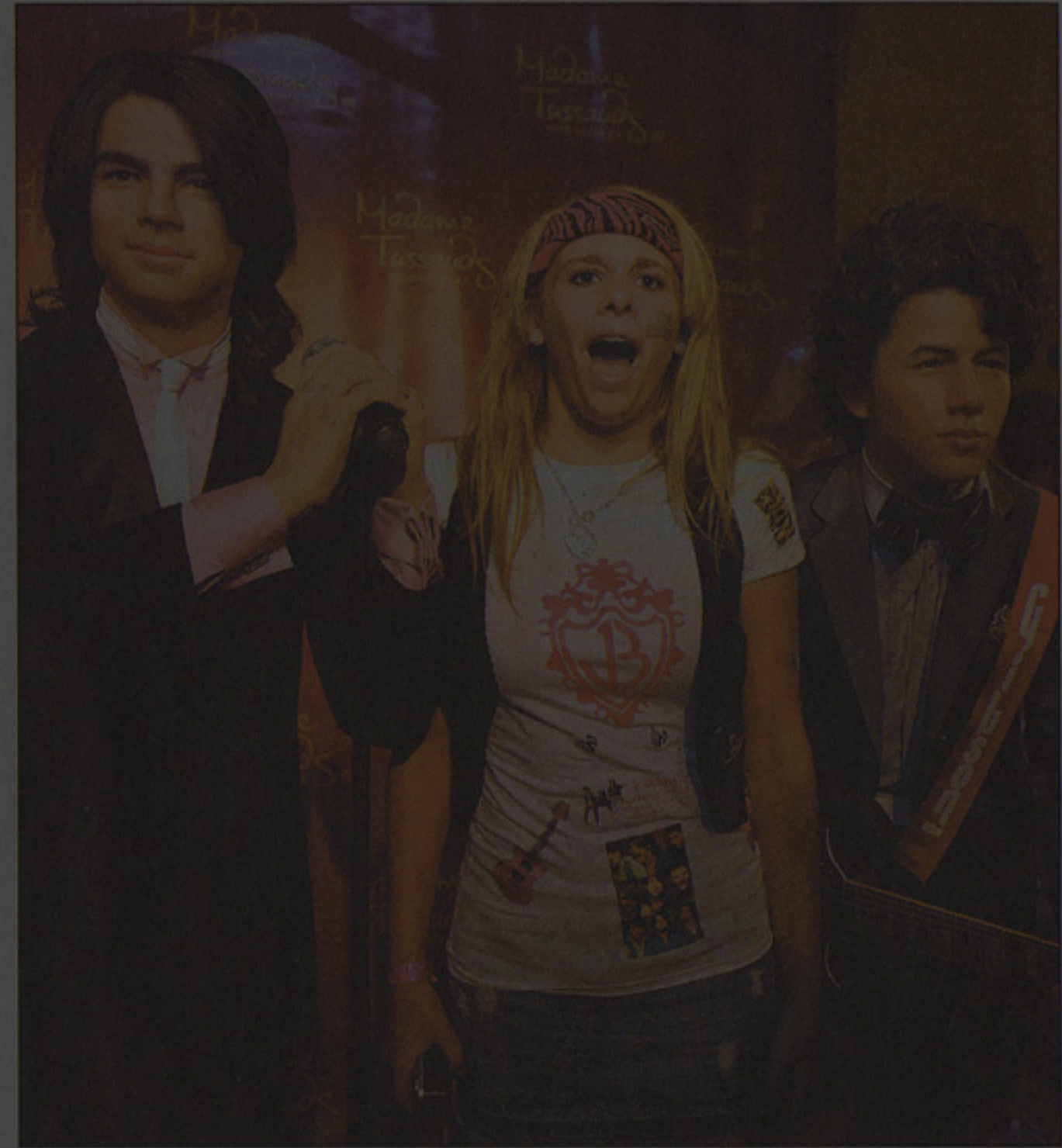
Where silence from the audience would have been much appreciated between movements, the well-filled venue erupted with applause.

This altercation may have thrown the strings off-kilter as intonation went awry briefly in the beginning of the finale.

The musicians, however, rallied in a hell-for-leather finish that finally brought the house down.

As a much-demanded encore, the quintet reprised the Tang work, proving that repeated listening does make the heart grow fonder.

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**WAX APPEAL:** Teenager Erica Lenza (centre) trembles as she stands between the wax figures of Joe Jonas (left) and Nick Jonas (right), unveiled at Madame Tussauds in Washington, DC, on Monday. The Jonas Brothers – three actual brothers who sing, play music and set teen hearts afire – rose to stardom in the United States with astonishing speed after they signed with Walt Disney Company's Hollywood Records last year. PHOTO: ASSOCIATED PRESS