

Great playing, not great music

review concert

TAKE 5 PIANO QUINTET SERIES

Esplanade Recital Studio/Sunday

marc rochester

Exploring the darker recesses of the piano quintet repertoire, it is almost inevitable that Take 5 should unearth a dud or two. Not that Respighi's is an out-and-out waste of space, but it is not among the A list of piano quintets - nor B, nor C.

What it seems to be is a dry run for the Piano Concerto that Respighi was writing at the same time, only without the orchestra bits, the four string players merely probing at a few ideas around the periphery of the piano's relentless virtuosity.

With the piano taking such a dominant role, it was as well that Lim Yan took it all in his stride, easily brushing aside the piece's substantial but, musically speaking, unnecessary technical obstacles. If there was a problem, it lay in the tuning of the piano itself, and its sour edge occasionally infected the strings' intonation.

Of course, the piano was still out of tune in the Bartok which followed, but it worried the ear far less. Here, the music was altogether more absorbing, and while there was no let-up in the virtuoso demands placed on the safe and tireless fingers of Lim, the strings found themselves with a serious and demanding job as well.

Those who think of Bartok as full of the melodies and dance rhythms of his native Hungary were in for a shock. For the first three movements, there was not the faintest whiff of folk music. Instead, we had a powerfully serious first movement, with a strangely contorted melodic line in which the viola of Chan Yoong-Han and the cello of Chan Wei Shing displayed a gripping partnership; a brisk second movement with a sting in its rhythmic tail; and a slow movement of such emotional intensity that Foo Say Ming and Lim Shue Churn needed two violins apiece to cover its complete range.

The finale sounded like an off-cut from something Dvorak might have written under the influence of alcohol, full of playful rhythms and the nursery songs of Bohemia. But for the musicians, it was hard work that called on reserves of stamina and collective virtuosity.

Even when faced with mediocre material, Take 5 are incapable of doing anything other than turning out a musically coherent and technically assured performance. This was great playing of less-than-great music.



“Take 5”要向本地乐迷推介相对冷门的作曲家作品。(“Take 5”提供图片)

“Take 5” 室内乐系列八

周雁冰 / 报道 “Take 5” 提供照片

“Take 5”室内乐系列由本地杰出音乐家林岩、符史滔、林抒真、曾勇涵和曾伟成发起，至今已成功举办七场深受好评的音乐会。

成立四年来，“Take 5”致力提高本地五重奏室内乐演奏和欣赏水准，如今又迈出一步——向本地乐迷推介相对冷门的作曲家作品。

来临的音乐会，“Take 5”将在本地首演匈牙利作曲家巴托克(Béla Bartók)和意大利作曲家雷斯皮基(Ottorino Respighi)的钢琴五重奏。

巴托克的钢琴五重奏是作曲家欲摆脱传统曲规格，将民间元素注入音乐当中的早期尝试。

雷斯皮基的钢琴五重奏，同样属于作曲家早期的作品。除了是当时一流的中提琴演奏家，雷斯皮基早年也曾像俄国作曲家里姆斯基-科萨科夫(Rimsky-Korsakov)学作曲。雷斯皮基创作这首曲子时只有23岁。

● “Take 5”室内乐系列八 / 3月25日星期天 / 晚上7时30分 / 滨海艺术中心音乐室 / 20元 (学生、国民服役人员和乐龄人士优惠价12元) / 可通过Gramercy Music(63453815)/Synwin Violins(67437865)/Tong Ming Xi(62388750)或电邮take5singapore@gmail.com购票。