



## Music from the Heart

**Esther Yoo's 2024-25 season includes the North American and Asian premieres of Raymond Yiu's Violin Concerto and Bruch's beguiling Violin Concerto No.1 with the Netherlands Radio, the China, Shanghai and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras**

**Violinist joins her Z.E.N. Trio colleagues for ensemble's Wigmore Hall debut and the RPO to perform and record Leonard Bernstein's *Serenade (after Plato's Symposium)***

'The opening recitativos of the Bruch No. 1 in G minor find violinist Esther Yoo magicking those well-worn phrases with yearning intensity and a sense of introspective awe,' *BBC Music Magazine*, 22 March 2023

Music of tremendous substance and expressive depth is set to occupy Esther Yoo throughout the coming season. The American-born Korean violinist offers her latest thoughts on one of the great monuments of the repertoire, Bruch's Violin Concerto No.1 in G minor, and returns to the Violin Concerto written for her by Raymond Yiu. Yoo's world premiere performance of the latter, given at London's Barbican Centre in March, was described as 'magical' by *Bachtrack*. She will present its revised version with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra next February and the Seattle Symphony Orchestra in April, the outcome of her close collaboration with the work's Hong Kong-born, London-based composer. Other highlights include the Wigmore Hall debut of her Z.E.N. Trio, concerto performances in China, and the continuation of her partnership with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, ongoing since her appointment as their first Artist-in-Residence in 2018.

Esther Yoo launches her 2024-25 season on Wednesday 18 September with Bernstein's *Serenade (after Plato's 'Symposium')*, given in company with the RPO and Long Yu at London's Cadogan Hall. She performed Bernstein's alluring lyrical score for her debut with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra last February, garnering applause and cheers between each of its five movements. The response, noted the *New York Times*, was 'as if she were a player of Paganini-like sensationalism', such was the wit and verve of her interpretation. She comes to Cadogan Hall fresh from recent performances of Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No.1 with the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra and Tugan Sokhiev.

"I'm very excited to take Bernstein's *Serenade* to London and to work with Long Yu for the first time," comments Esther Yoo. "I have a long-standing relationship with the RPO and always enjoy making music with them. After our performance, we will record the Bernstein for future release on Deutsche Grammophon. The *Serenade* is great fun to play. It's one of these pieces where as a soloist you feel part of the ensemble, fully immersed in the bigger picture. I think it's a special work which deserves to be much better known."

Yoo resumes her cherished chamber music partnership with pianist Zee Zee and cellist Narek Hakhnazaryan this autumn, training the spotlight on another fine yet infrequently performed work, the Piano Trio in F-sharp minor by Armenian composer Arno Babadjanian. The Z.E.N. Trio is scheduled to give three concerts at St Mark's Church in Belfast as part of the Belfast Festival (28, 29 & 30 October), offering diverse programmes built around Shostakovich's Piano Trio No.1, Rachmaninov's *Trio Élégiacque* No.1 and Babadjanian's impassioned Piano Trio. They will take the Rachmaninov, Shostakovich and Babadjanian trios to the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Humlebaek, Denmark (Friday 22 November) and bring them to London for the group's Wigmore Hall debut (Sunday 1 December).

"We're thrilled to present this programme at Wigmore Hall," notes Esther Yoo. "The Rachmaninov is new to our repertoire, while the Shostakovich and Babadjanian trios, immensely powerful works from Soviet times, sit very well together. I'm so pleased that we have been able to raise the profile of Babadjanian's Piano Trio with our performances and recording of it and that we can do so again at Wigmore Hall."

The story of Bruch's First Violin Concerto, an audience favourite for more than 150 years, shares points in common with Raymond Yiu's Violin Concerto. The two works were both written with particular players in mind – Bruch's for Joseph Joachim, Yiu's for Yoo – and both were revised after their first performances in collaboration with the artists who first brought them to life. Esther Yoo returns to Bruch's evergreen composition in company with the Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra and Long Yu at Jaguar Shanghai Symphony Hall on Saturday 22 February, with the China Philharmonic Orchestra and Long Yu in Beijing on Friday 28 February and on Friday 7 March with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra and Ruth Reinhardt at TivoliVredenburg Utrecht. She opens the Radio Philharmonic's matinee concert at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam on Sunday 9 March with Bruch's fervent *Adagio Appassionato* Op.57.

Esther Yoo will also perform Bruch's First Violin Concerto during a mini tour with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under its Chief Conductor, Vasily Petrenko, with concerts at Nottingham Royal Concert Hall and Birmingham Symphony Hall (Thursday 27 & Saturday 29 March). "This a great opportunity for me to revisit the Bruch with Vasily and the RPO," she notes. "It's one of the works we performed together on my last album for Deutsche Grammophon. It will be the first time we've done the work in the UK since we made the recording. Bruch's *Adagio Appassionato* was also on the album, so I'm delighted to be able to perform it at the Concertgebouw with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic."

Yoo's season includes the Asian and North American premieres of Raymond Yiu's Violin Concerto. She takes the work's revised score to the Hong Kong Cultural Centre for performances on Friday 14 & Saturday 15 February with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra and Jaap van Zweden, and revisits it on Thursday 10, Friday 11 and Saturday 12 April with the Seattle Symphony Orchestra and Alexander Shelley. The work, co-commissioned by the BBC Symphony, the Seattle Symphony and the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, was inspired by the great Chinese violinist Ma Sicong. Ma's biography was shaped by the turbulent history of 20<sup>th</sup>-century China. Born in Guangdong province in 1912, he began playing violin at the age of eleven and later studied in Paris. He came home to China in 1929, where he was feted as the 'King of Violinists'. Ma survived the deadly famine that swept Guangdong in 1943 as a consequence of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45); following the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1948, he was appointed the first president of Beijing's Central Conservatory. Like countless creative artists, Ma was a prime target for the anti-elitist persecution unleashed by the outbreak of Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution in 1966. After being tortured by the Red Guards, he and his family escaped China by boat to Hong Kong and eventually made their way to America, where he remained until his death in 1987.

"The world premiere of Ray's concerto was a great success," she recalls. "I look forward to performing it again with the Seattle Symphony and Alexander Shelley this season and beyond that with the Hong Kong Philharmonic and Jaap van Zweden. Ray and I are still working closely on the score, as there are some things in the original version that we want to revise. It's great fun and really exciting to contribute to the evolution of this wonderful work. And it has been a treat to have such a close creative relationship with Ray. His willingness to listen, to adapt, to be open-minded and work on things together is truly uplifting."

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**Wednesday 18 September 2024, 7:30pm, Cadogan Hall, London**

**Mussorgsky** Khovanshchina: Prelude 'Dawn on the Moscow River' (orch. Rimsky-Korsakov)  
**Bernstein** Serenade (after Plato's 'Symposium')  
**Mussorgsky** Pictures at an Exhibition (orch. Ravel)

**Esther You** violin | **Long Yu** conductor | **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**

**Monday 28 October 2024, 7:30pm, St Mark's Church, Belfast**  
**Tuesday 29 October 2024, 7:30pm, St Mark's Church, Belfast**  
**Wednesday 30 October 2024, 7:30pm, St Mark's Church, Belfast**  
**Z.E.N. Trio**

**Rachmaninov** Piano Trio No. 1 in G minor '*Trio Élégiacque*'  
**Shostakovich** Piano Trio No.1 in C minor  
**Babadjanian** Piano Trio in F sharp minor

**Esther Yoo** violin | **Narek Hakhnazaryan** cello | **Zee Zee** piano

**Friday 22 November 2024 8:00pm, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, The Concert Hall, Humlebaek,**  
**Z.E.N. Trio**

**Rachmaninov** Piano Trio No. 1 in G minor '*Trio Élégiacque*'  
**Shostakovich** Piano Trio No.1 in C minor  
**Babadjanian** Piano Trio in F sharp minor

**Esther Yoo** violin | **Narek Hakhnazaryan** cello | **Zee Zee** piano

**Thursday 28 November 2024, 8:00pm, Teatro Cervantes, Málaga**  
**Friday 29 November 2024, 8:00pm, Teatro Cervantes, Málaga**

**Dukas** *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* in F minor,  
**Mendelssohn** Concerto for Violin in E minor  
**Debussy** *Images* (suite for orchestra)

**Esther Yoo** violin | **José María Moreno** conductor | **Málaga Philharmonic Orchestra**

**Sunday 1 December 2024, 7:30pm, Wigmore Hall, London**  
**Z.E.N. Trio**

**Rachmaninov** Piano Trio No. 1 in G minor '*Trio Élégiacque*'  
**Shostakovich** Piano Trio No. 2 in E minor  
**Babadjanian** Piano Trio in F sharp minor

**Esther Yoo** violin | **Narek Hakhnazaryan** cello | **Zee Zee** piano

**Friday 14 February 2025, 8:00pm, Hong Kong Cultural Centre: Concert Hall, Hong Kong**  
**Saturday 15 February 2025, 5:00pm Hong Kong Cultural Centre: Concert Hall, Hong Kong**

**Beethoven** *Fidelio* Overture  
**Yiu** Violin Concerto (Asian premiere)  
**Beethoven** Symphony No. 7 in A Major

**Esther Yoo** violin | **Jaap van Zweden** conductor | **Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra**

**Saturday 22 February 2025, 8:00pm, Jaguar Shanghai Symphony Hall - Concert Hall, Shanghai**

**Bruch:** Violin Concert No.1 in G minor  
**Rachmaninov:** Symphony No. 2 in E minor

**Esther You** violin | **Long Yu** conductor | **Shanghai Symphony Orchestra**

**Friday 28 February 2025, Time TBC, Venue TBC, Beijing**

**Bruch** Violin Concerto No.1 in G minor

**Esther Yoo** violin | **China Philharmonic Orchestra**

**Friday 7 March 2025, 8:15pm, TivoliVredenburg, Large Hall, Utrecht**

**Lutoslawski** *Little suite (Mała suita)*

**Bruch** Violin Concerto No.1 in G minor

**Dvořák** Symphony No.8 in G Major

**Esther Yoo** violin | **Ruth Reinhardt** conductor | **Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra**

**Sunday 9 March 2025, 11:00 am, Concertgebouw Main Hall, Amsterdam**

**Bruch** Adagio Appassionato

**Tchaikovsky** Valse-scherzo in C Major

**Dvořák** Symphony No. 8 in G Major

**Esther Yoo** violin | **Ruth Reinhardt** conductor | **Netherlands Radio Philharmonic (Radio Filharmonisch Orkest)**

**Thursday 27 March 2025, 7:30pm, Nottingham Royal Concert Hall, Nottingham**

**Tchaikovsky** *Romeo and Juliet*, Fantasy Overture

**Bruch** Violin Concerto No.1 in G minor

**Prokofiev** Symphony No. 5 in B flat Major

**Esther Yoo** violin | **Vasily Petrenko** conductor | **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**

**Saturday 29 March, 7:30pm, Symphony Hall, Birmingham**

**Tchaikovsky** *Romeo and Juliet*, Fantasy Overture

**Bruch** Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor

**Prokofiev** Symphony No. 5 in B flat Major

**Esther Yoo** violin | **Vasily Petrenko** conductor | **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**

**Thursday 10 April 2025, 7:30pm, Benaroya Hall, S Mark Taper Auditorium, Seattle**

**Friday 11 April 2025, 12:00pm, Benaroya Hall, S Mark Taper Auditorium, Seattle**

**Saturday 12 April 2025 8:00pm, Benaroya Hall, S Mark Taper Auditorium, Seattle**

**Bartók** *Romanian Folk Dances*, Sz. 68

**Yiu** Violin Concerto

**Dvořák** Symphony No. 9 in E minor, 'From the New World'

**Esther Yoo** violin | **Alexander Shelley** conductor | **Seattle Symphony**