

BIO - Bobby Chen
www.bobbychen.org

Described by International Piano Magazine as: "...an armour-clad player of complete technique, a thinking musician, a natural Romantic.", BOBBY CHEN was a pupil of Ruth Nye MBE and Hamish Milne at the Yehudi Menuhin School and the Royal Academy of Music, and burst on the scene in playing Beethoven's Triple Concerto in a British tour with Lord Yehudi Menuhin and the Warsaw Sinfonia, and a recital at the Royal Festival Hall as part of the South Bank Prokofiev Festival.

Since then, he has performed as concerto soloist with several orchestras including the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields, Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra and the London Sinfonietta, under the baton of conductors Matthias Bamert, Maximiano Valdés, Michał Nesterowicz, Sir Neville Marriner, Pierre-André Valade, Lan Shui, Jonathan Bloxham and Giancarlo Guerrero. He has broadcast live for UK's Classic Fm, Ireland's Raidió Teilifís Éireann (Radio Television Ireland), Hong Kong's Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) and USA's Pianoforte Chicago.

He was one of the pianists selected for the South-East Asian début of the Complete Beethoven Sonatas Cycle in Singapore, and has performed solo recitals and piano concertos at Hong Kong's City Hall, Italy's Fazioli Concert Hall, Dublin's National Concert Hall, Kuala Lumpur's Dewan Filharmonik Petronas, Singapore's Victoria Concert Hall, Turku's Sibelius Museum, and at UK's Bridgewater Hall, Royal Concert Hall, Cadogan Hall, Purcell Room, Reid Concert Hall, Royal Overseas League and Menuhin Hall, including four solo recitals at the Wigmore Hall.

He has performed chamber music at Beijing's Forbidden City Concert Hall, Vigo's Auditorio Sala de Concertos Martín Códax, London's Royal Academy of the Arts and the Wigmore Hall. Festivals he has appeared at included São Paulo's Musica Nova Contemporary Music Festival, Sweden's Lidköping Music Festival, Ireland's Music for Wexford and Wicklow Arts Festival, and at UK's Worcester Three Choirs Festival, Guildford International Music Festival and Bristol International Piano Duo Festival. He has represented Malaysia at the 27th Annual Federation of Asian Cultural Promotion (FACP) Conference, and celebrated Malaysia's 50th Anniversary as a nation by giving the world premiere performance of a new piano concerto at London's Cadogan Hall.

He has given world premiere performances of music by Tazul Izan Tajuddin, Stephen Goss, Douglas Finch, Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Arnold Griller, Stephanie Cant and Benjamin Dwyer. He has performed together with artist Geraldine van Heemstra an innovative Lecture-Recital on 'Pictures at an Exhibition' by Mussorgsky. An Ambassador for Rainforest Concern as well as an honoured recipient of 'The BrandLaureate Country Branding Award 2011', he is elected an Associate of London's Royal Academy of Music (ARAM), selected as an Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Music Hong Kong Alumni Association (RAMHKAA), and is currently a trustee of both the Beethoven Piano Society of Europe (BPSE) and the Piano Trio Society (PTS). He was one of the sponsors for both the 2020 and 2022 editions of the UCSI University International Piano Festival & Competition in Malaysia. He was on the teaching faculty at the Surrey Music Academy Chamber Music Workshop in 2024. He was on the teaching faculty at Chetham's International Piano Summer School in 2012, 2015, 2018 and 2024. He was on the summer teaching faculty at Cambridge Chamber Academy now renamed as Cambridge Camerata Academy from 2021 to 2023, and now on its full time piano faculty. He is founder of the biennial Overseas Masters Winter Piano Academy (OMWPA), which has taken place on the premises of the Yehudi Menuhin School in 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2022 and 2024 with the next edition in 2026.

He has performed as solo recitalist at Corpus Christi College in Oxford, at Pembroke College in Cambridge and at the Royal College of Music as part of a fundraising campaign to raise more than three million pounds for the construction of a new music centre at Monkton Combe School near Bath. He had also offered one masterclass as part of an auction organised by the Asfari Foundation in aid of UNICEF (UK). Highlights between 2018 and 2020 included a solo recital and performances of Beethoven 4th Piano Concerto at the Dewan Filharmonik Petronas in Kuala Lumpur on his 4th visit there as soloist with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, a 2-piano recital with regular duo partner Douglas Finch on the opening day of the inaugural 'Chetham's International Piano Series' at the Stoller Hall in Manchester, solo recitals at the inaugural recital series at Bowerman Hall near Bath, at London's St. Mary's Perivale and Farm Street Church, and a special solo recital for the British Jesuit Alumni/ae Charitable Trust at Ognisko Polskie in support of The Langlands School and College in Chitral, Pakistan.

Highlights in 2021 and 2022 included a solo recital in support of Rainforest Concern at the Travellers Club, a short solo recital of women composers featuring the Boulanger sisters and Clara Wieck/Schumann in the presence of Alderman Emma Edhem for FIWAL (The Federations of International Women's Association in London) at Ironmongers' Hall, a solo recital at Farm Street Church in Mayfair which had raised more than two thousand eight hundred pounds for Caritas Ukraine, a performance with Leslie Howard and Simon Callow CBE of a new 4-hands version of Prokofiev's 'Peter and the Wolf' at the Reform Club in support of The David Nott Foundation, and a private solo recital at Farm Street Church in Mayfair for CAFOD (The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development) in aid of the East Africa Food Crisis.

Highlights in 2023 included a solo recital in aid of Jesuit Missions' Turkey and Syria earthquake appeal and Jesuit Refugee Services in Syria in the presence of Guests of honour from the Turkish embassy, a performance with Alberto Portugheis featuring Jacob Costard in the presence of HM Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey Michael More-Molyneux for OASIS (Oasis Childcare Centre Ltd), a performance as concerto soloist with Brandon Hill Chamber Orchestra conducted by Daniel Robert Cushing for Bath Recitals, a recital for the Grieg Society of Great Britain as well as two private London recitals for winning bidders of auctions organised separately by the Keyboard Charitable Trust and an unnamed individual.

Highlights in 2024 and 2025 included a solo recital for the Chopin Society UK, the world premiere performance with Douglas Finch of 'Songs of the Chenfinch' for two pianos composed by Arnold Griller, a solo recital towards the Humanitarian Relief Fund of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem through the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, a solo recital towards the 'Jubilee 175 Fundraising Campaign' of Farm Street Church, a 2-piano performance with Simone Tavoni and four singers of the complete Symphony No.9 by Beethoven at the Reform Club in support of The David Nott Foundation as well as a duo recital with violist Sarah-Jane Bradley at the Old Divinity School St John's College Cambridge. www.bobbychen.org

REVIEWS:

...There was much to enjoy in a solo evening recital at the National Concert Hall by Malaysian-born pianist Bobby Chen. With the partial exception of Busoni's mighty piano transcription of Bach's solo violin chaconne, all items dated from the 19th century, and Chen seemed to play each one of them better than the last.....Having first asserted itself in the central section of the fourth Impromptu, Chen's instinct for disciplined flexibility informed a thunderous and truly epic account of the chaconne, kept Field's quirky Variations on a Russian Folk Song on a compelling trajectory, and rendered the other-worldly impressions of Liszt's Deux Légendes as things utterly persuasive.

(The Irish Times - Ireland)

...Chen is an armour-clad player of complete technique, a thinking musician, a natural Romantic. His Schubert positively glows; his boldly projected Haydn impresses for its Michelangeli-like clarity of execution. Petrushka, a marvel of exacting detail and precision attack, triumphs with the best – a powerfully coloured, authentically Russian journey. Nothing seems too difficult, yet nor is anything merely facile. The tension is perfectly gauged. It is so inevitably right that after a while you begin to wonder why everyone doesn't play like this.....Pianist-watchers out for youthful urge and freshness caught on the wing will not want to miss Liszt's Ballade or Franciscan Legends. Mega-high on the wow factor, they scale the awesome...Hearing Chen spur his Fazioli is to experience a distinctive cocktail of weight, balance and onward flow, the medium and its mechanics decisively understood and controlled from within. His arsenal of gran espressione phrases, thunderbolt octaves and basaltic chords quarried from the deep, Arrau/Russian-descended is imperial, his ability to suggest colour and image through touch, timing and dynamic voicing already masterly. Young bloods come no better.

(International Piano Magazine)

...Chen's touch was masterful, combining the solid enviable technique of the Russian school with the assured elegance of his Claudio Arrau lineage. (Straits Times - Singapore)

*...The Romeo and Juliet Suite bristles with energy and atmosphere, and Toccata coruscates. **** (The Independent - UK)*

...and an evening concert in which the young Malaysian pianist Bobby Chen made magic with Prokofiev. (The Independent-UK)

...His accounts of the Ten Pieces from Romeo & Juliet Op.75 and the Op.11 Toccata being on altogether a different level of musical understanding and artistic projection...(Musical Opinion - UK)