

**HAYATO SUMINO**  
piano

**JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)**  
**Chromatic Fantasie & Fugue in D minor BWV 903**  
(approx. 12 minutes)

**HAYATO SUMINO (b. 1995)**  
**New Birth (after Chopin)**  
(approx. 4 minutes)

**HAYATO SUMINO (b. 1995)**  
**Recollection (after Chopin)**  
(approx. 5 minutes)

**HAYATO SUMINO (b. 1995)**  
**Nocturne No. 1 Pre-Rain**  
**Nocturne No. 2 After Dawn**  
**Nocturne No. 3 Once in a Blue Moon**  
(approx. 11 minutes)

**FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN (1810-1849)**  
**Nocturne in C minor Op. 48 No. 1**  
Lento  
(approx. 6 minutes)

**FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN (1810-1849)**  
**Scherzo No. 1 in B minor Op. 20**  
Presto con fuoco  
(approx. 10 minutes)

HAYATO SUMINO (b. 1995)

Big Cat Waltz

(approx. 5 minutes)

GEORGE GERSHWIN (1898–1937)

An American in Paris (arr. Hayato Sumino)

(approx. 20 minutes)

MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937)

Bolero (arr. Hayato Sumino)

(approx. 9 minutes)

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Johann Sebastian Bach

Chromatic Fantasia & Fugue in D minor BWV 903

The pairing of a “flashy” movement in an improvisatory style with its polar opposite — a rigorously structured fugue — is a staple of the Baroque instrumental repertoire. And yet Bach’s *Chromatic Fantasia & Fugue* stands out amongst other examples of the genre for its expressive boldness, its virtuosic exuberance and above all for the pervasive climbing semitones in its voice-leading and harmonies that give it the well-justified name “Chromatic.”

The opening *Fantasia* gives us an idea of what it must have been like to hear Bach improvising at the keyboard. His sense of drama is evident from the outset in the way the movement’s initial gestures sweep up and down the keyboard but then simply hang in mid-air, creating an aura of expectation for what will follow.



And what follows is a kaleidoscopic series of flashy runs and toccata-like passagework that spans the entire range of the instrument of Bach’s time.

Emblematic of the freedom invested in the performer to astonish his audience are the passages marked *arpeggio*.

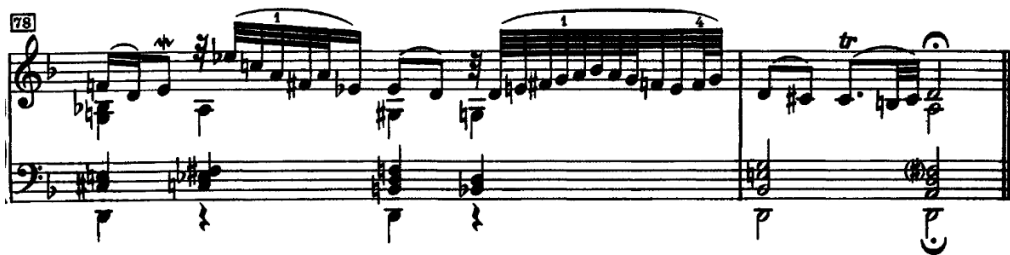


Here the keyboard player is invited to “riff” on the harmonies provided in any way deemed appropriate.

A middle section of recitative brings the performer’s expressive gifts to the fore in a stop-and-start series of phrases oozing with pathos, each ending in a sigh motive.



But the ornamental filigree that decorates the recitative’s melodic lines soon becomes indistinguishable from the flights of fancy that began the movement, and the *Fantasia* ends in wave after wave of “crunchy” dissonances to eventually settle on its final chord, brightened with a major “Picardy” third.



The *Fugue* that follows is in no way less colourful. Its lengthy subject is rhythmically “flat,” comprised of only quarter notes and 8ths, to allow the ear to concentrate on its principal motives: a pair of climbing chromatic lines crowned with a mordent figure.

### Fuga



Rhythmic interest is provided by “skipping” 16th-note figures at the tail end of the fugue subject, which are then taken over by the countersubject.



Bach applies no arcane contrapuntal devices to this theme but rather leaves it to grind its way chromatically through the texture in each of the fugue’s three voices.

As is typical in many fugues, a pedal point on the dominant prepares the final cadence.



What is *not* typical is how the texture is thickened and reinforced with octaves, making the point clear, to all that have ears to hear, that this is a real “showpiece” of a fugue.

### Hayato Sumino New Birth (after Chopin) Recollection (after Chopin)

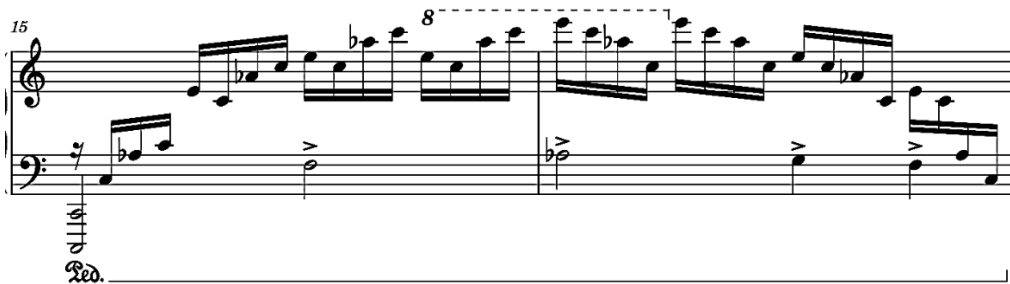
Pianist-composer Hayato Sumino (“Cateen” to his more than 1.5 million YouTube followers) is a musician for our time, one whose interests, talents and accomplishments are divided, seemingly in equal measure, between the disparate domains of classical music and popular culture.

Especially engaging for contemporary audiences are his arrangements and creative re-imaginings of well-known music from the past. Such music was a staple in the repertoire of the most famous 19th-century pianists, whose compositional creativity vied with their digital dexterity for the favour of their audiences. And it is still the mix of talents expected of jazz musicians today.

Having reached the semifinals of the 2021 International Chopin Piano Competition, Hayato Sumino is known as a Chopin interpreter. It is not surprising, then, that Chopin's most famous works form the starting point for many of his creative re-imaginings, amongst which might be mentioned his "White Keys Etude," "Raindrop Postlude" and "Happy Birthday" in the style of the "Aeolian Harp."

\* \* \*

*New Birth* is based on Chopin's Etude in C major Op. 10 No. 1 with slightly altered harmonies and an added melody line in the baritone range that captures the ear's attention.



In this way, Hayato Sumino revives another 19th-century pianistic trope: the "three-hand" effect used in many of the operatic fantasies of Sigismund Thalberg (1812-1871) and *Réminiscences* of Franz Liszt (1811-1886), in which a melody appeared in the mid-range while a full bass sounded below and elaborate filigree occupied the upper register of the keyboard.

*Recollection*, as its title indicates, is a mood piece and correspondingly more subtle in its allusion to this lilting melody that opens Chopin's Ballade in F major Op. 38:



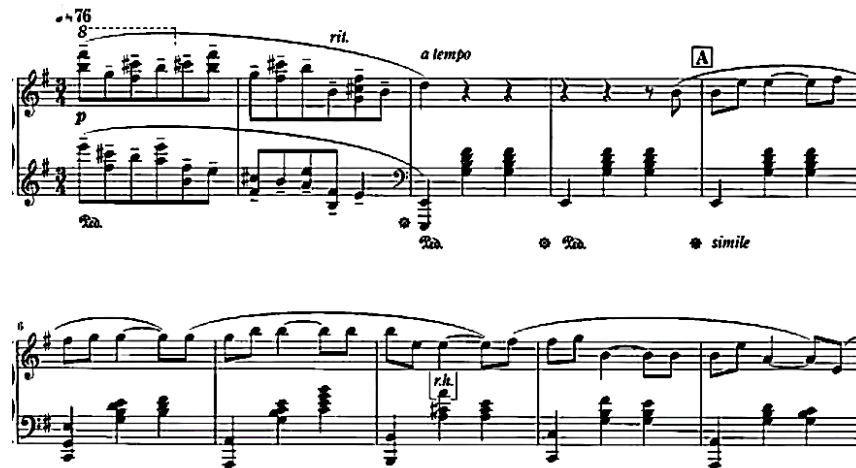
Chopin's melody is present throughout this piece, but discreetly hidden in a wealth of colourful pianistic textures until it finally appears in the tenuto notes of a simpler texture towards the end.



## Hayato Sumino Three Nocturnes

Hayato Sumino's trilogy entitled *Three Nocturnes* depicts the moods experienced by the composer in various locales around the world, expressed in a modern slow-jazz harmonic vocabulary.

*Nocturne No. 1 Pre-Rain* is a pensive meditation in the form of a slow waltz.



The musical score for *Nocturne No. 1 Pre-Rain* is presented in two systems. The first system begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = 76 and a dynamic of *p*. The music features a melodic line in the right hand with a *rit.* (ritardando) marking and a *a tempo* marking. A section labeled **A** is indicated by a box. The second system continues the piece, featuring a *rit.* marking and a *simile* instruction. The score is written in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

“It was composed in South Korea in winter,” the composer says. “It was very cold, half snowing, half raining, so the piece is kind of like that.”

*Nocturne No. 2 After Dawn*, as the composer says, “comes from my hometown in Japan while I was jetlagged.”



The musical score for *Nocturne No. 2 After Dawn* is presented in two systems. The first system begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = 63 and a dynamic of *pp*. The music features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A section labeled **A** is indicated by a box. The second system continues the piece, featuring a *pp* dynamic and a *con fda.* (con fada) instruction. The score is written in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

*Nocturne No. 3 Once in a Blue Moon* was composed deep in the countryside of the South of France. It rhapsodizes in streams of parallel 4ths over the endless splendour of the landscape within view, enlivened by the occasional chirp from the local birdlife.

Frédéric Chopin  
Nocturne in C Minor Op. 48 No. 1

Chopin's nocturnes owe much to the keyboard textures invented by Irish pianist John Field (1782–1837). Under Field, and then Chopin, the nocturne evoked the timeless stillness of nighttime by means of its trademark pairing of a serene, singable melody in the right hand floating atop an accompaniment constantly murmuring with the gentle ripples of widely spaced arpeggiated harmonies in the left. These harmonies, when pedaled, produce a hazy mist of overtones vividly suggestive of the night-owl's half-drowsy awareness of his surroundings.

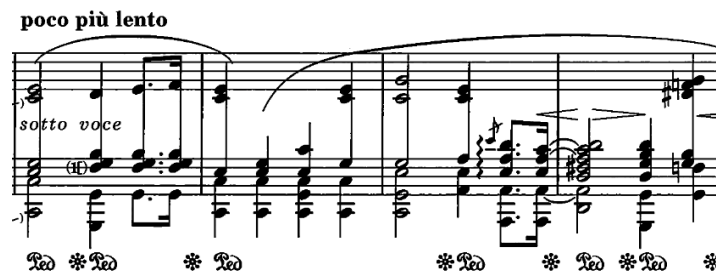
Chopin's *Nocturne in C minor Op. 48 No. 1*, however, displays a much different texture. The slow, deliberate pace and quasi-sobbing, pathos-tinged syncopations in the melodic line might well suggest the downcast ruminations of some lonely figure in the stillness of the night.



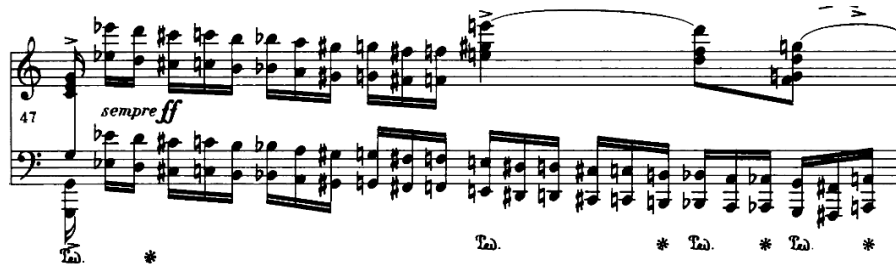
But there is something different in the keyboard texture of this nocturne. There is no “hazy mist” in the accompaniment. The harmonies are projected with razor sharp clarity, their changes often sounding like the movement of tectonic plates as the ground shifts underneath the melody.

The extraordinarily wide pacing between the right and left hands, along with the imbalance in sound between the treble's single line of melody and the softly booming, sometimes even threatening octaves in the bass line, radiate an aura of tragic grandeur uncommon in the nocturne genre.

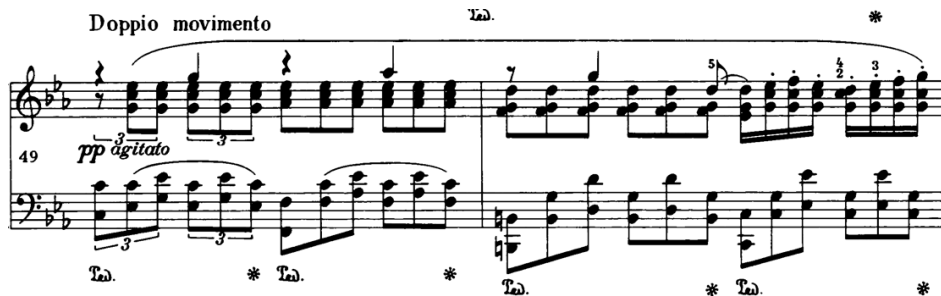
And the middle section reveals what has been hiding in the night when a spaciouly arpeggiated hymn-like melody unexpectedly emerges.



This hymn is at first “accompanied” by an escort of octaves and then finally taken over by them to reach a spectacular climax of nothing *but* octaves.



When the opening melody returns, it seems transformed by what it has gone through and passionately pleads its case with much increased urgency, swaddled in the close accompaniment of chordal harmonies that pulse in triplets like a fluttering heart under the stress of vivid emotion.



## Frédéric Chopin Scherzo No. 1 in B minor Op. 20

The Scherzos of Chopin are a long way from the “joke” movements that substituted for the minuet in Beethoven’s sonatas and symphonies. While Beethoven replaced the conformity of courtly decorum with personal whimsy and jovial, good-natured ribbing, Chopin kicked down the door to announce a new level of emotional intensity, a new, wider playing field for what was possible on the keyboard at the extremes of musical expression.

Belying his popular image as the composer of exotic, delicately perfumed salon pieces, Chopin’s scherzos are muscular essays in pure pianistic power, and none more so than his **Scherzo No. 1 in B minor Op. 20**.

The work dates from Chopin’s trip to Vienna at the age of 20, during which time the Warsaw uprising against Russia, often associated with the composer’s Revolutionary Étude, made return to his Polish homeland impossible and his exile in Paris virtually inevitable.

Is there bitterness in this piece, an angry resolve? The stinging opening chords leave us room to suspect both.



The main musical idea pursued from the outset is a nervous, petulant figuration split between the hands that rises from the lowest to the highest reaches of the keyboard in the space of a single phrase,



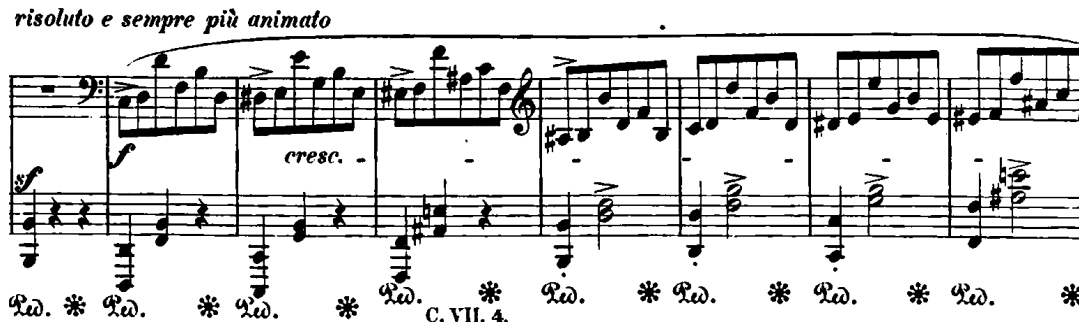
alternating in its impetuous course with pauses for moments of reflection and pathos.

Rapid figuration of this sort, stretching over a 10th in each hand, defines the new world of technique that Chopin was introducing into modern pianism, first glimpsed in the wide-spanning arpeggios of the C major étude that opens the composer's collection of Op. 10.

The trio middle section provides extreme dramatic contrast in the form of a lullaby: the old Polish Christmas carol *Lulajże Jezuniu* (Sleep, Little Jesus), with its hypnotically lulling rhythm and comforting pedal note in the bass.



The return of the agitated opening section brings a take-no-prisoners approach to the proceedings when it drives forward into a coda of spectacular vehemence, with left-hand off-beat accents nipping like a mad dog at the heels of the advancing harmonies.



The work finishes as it began, with a pair of dramatic chords providing an uncompromising minor-mode “Amen” to this turbulent piece.

## Hayato Sumino Big Cat Waltz

Hayato Sumino has a fawn-coloured cat who, from his occasional cameo appearances in the composer’s YouTube videos, looks like he hasn’t missed many meals. Hence the title of the *Big Cat Waltz*, which after a brief introduction slides effortlessly into this good-natured waltz tune.



Alert listeners will catch numerous references to the waltzes of Chopin and sly winks in the direction of Johann Strauss II, especially in the work’s melodic “rebound” echoes at the ends of phrases.

## George Gershwin

### An American in Paris (arr. Hayato Sumino)

George Gershwin returned from his 1926 trip to Paris filled with admiration for the city's vibrant pace of life and immediately set to work to capture his impressions of it in a symphonic poem that he called *An American in Paris* (1928). He described it as follows:

*My purpose here is to portray the impressions of an American visitor in Paris as he strolls about the city, listens to the various street noises, and absorbs the French atmosphere.*

And much “strolling” there is indeed in this work, with its many “walking themes,” the most recognizable of which opens the work with the carefree air of a fashionable Parisian man-about-town briskly making his way down the Champs-Élysées on a sunny spring day.



Most memorable among the “street noises” that Gershwin includes in his score are the honking horns of passing taxis.



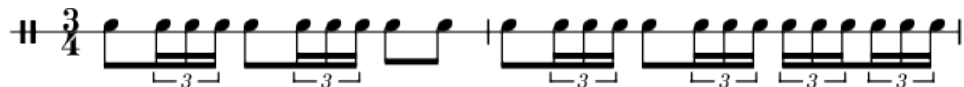
Hayato Sumino, whose own improvisatory style owes much to the jazz idiom of Gershwin, passes in review the major themes of this work with the style and flair of the composer himself.

**Maurice Ravel**  
**Bolero (arr. Hayato Sumino)**

The *bolero* is a Spanish dance in 3/4 time proceeding at a relatively slow and deliberate pace to the accompaniment of a guitar and castanets.

Ravel's *Bolero* (1928) was originally conceived as a piece of Spanish-inspired ballet music for dancer Ida Rubinstein (1883–1960) but later developed into an independent work for orchestra.

The work features a steady, repetitive “castanet” rhythm



over which a simple melodic line of an Iberian modal character



whistles, hums and eventually wails as a continuous piling-on of new instrumental colours and an ever-so-gradual crescendo moves the piece to its final grand climax.

In 1929 Ravel created a version of this orchestral work for two pianos, little suspecting that almost a century later another two-piano version would be created – with both pianos played by a single performer.

Donald Gíslason 2026