

Preview

New Amici Trio in Chagrin Valley Chamber Music finale— a conversation with pianist Cicilia Yudha

by Daniel Hathaway



Among the chamber groups that have disbanded and successfully been revived is the Amici Trio, formed in Youngstown in 1980 with violinist John Wilcox, pianist Roman Rudnytsky and Michael Gelfand. The trio disbanded around 2005, but reappeared in 2008 as the *New Amici Trio* with Gelfand still at the cello position, plus violinist Hristo Popov and pianist Dror Biran. A series of pianists rotated into the trio until Cicilia Yudha joined the Youngstown State University Dana School of Music faculty last August. The trio will play the final concert in this season's Chagrin Valley Chamber Music Series on Sunday, April 21 at 3:00 in Valley Lutheran Church in Chagrin Falls.

Cicilia Yudha enjoys playing in a piano trio again for musical as well as sentimental reasons. She grew up in a musical family in Indonesia, she told us by phone, “and my two brothers played violin and cello. I love chamber music and its an honor and a pleasure to play such great repertory.”

Yudha's mother was a piano teacher, and her father a great collector of recordings and videos, so western classical music was always part of her domestic life. Not to much at school. “There were three or five out of a hundred and fifty students doing music lessons. When I first came to Cleveland I experienced all of these kids from 8 to 18 practicing and playing music and I thought, what are all these kids doing here?”

Yudha's move to the US was inspired by a fellow student who was encouraged by fellow Indonesian musician Jahja Ling to come study at the Cleveland Institute of Music with the famous “Miss Olga” (Radosavljevich). “My friend said that if you want to be a good classical pianist, you have to study with my teacher at CIM. So my parents had to give up their youngest daughter — never mind that I was this little troublemaker at the time!”

Cicilia Yudha entered the young artists program at CIM, advanced to the college program which she completed in two and a half years thanks to credits she had earned, “and I was having so much fun with my teacher that I stayed on to do an artist diploma”. After moving to Boston for graduate study then to North Carolina for her doctorate, Yhuda landed a job as assistant professor of keyboard musicianship at the Dana School at Youngstown State University. “So I ended up an hour and a half away from where I started!”

Yudha's responsibilities include teaching basic piano skills to non-keyboard majors, teaching group piano classes as well as a few piano minors, assisting Caroline Oltmanns with the piano seminar and teaching accompanying to piano majors. "I'm very passionate about music education and giving something concrete to future teachers."

As a pianist, Yudha is instinctively drawn to Chopin and Schumann, "which fit my hands and my temperament, though I love exploring late French music and the challenge of new music." She'll says she'll take on one of Elliott Carter's smaller pieces when she plays for a set of auditions in Pittsburgh this weekend, but adds wryly, "When I get to the *Night Fantasy*, I'll let you know."

On Sunday, April 21 at 3 pm, the New Amici Trio plays Haydn's Trio in E, Schumann's Trio in g and Arensky's Trio No. 1 in d at Valley Lutheran Church in Chagrin Falls. A freewill offering will be received.

Published on clevelandclassical.com April 16, 2013