

TPR Classical

Classical Music, 24-hours a day, on KPAC 88.3 FM in San Antonio and KTXI 90.1 FM in the Hill Country.

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10 Questions for the Gold Medalist

24-hour
Classical Music

for
SAN ANTONIO
And South Central Texas

Next week, Van Cliburn Gold Medalist Nobuyuki Tsujii performs in San Antonio. We asked him ten questions about the recital and more!

10. What is your recital program for San Antonio?

1st half consists of works by Mozart and Liszt.

1st piece is 12 Variations on "Ah, vous dirai-je, maman" in C major, K.265.

I played this piece when I was a young child, just as many Japanese piano students do.

Its theme is lovely and very well known, following variations are enjoyable both for pianist and for audience.

I believe you'll like it.

2nd piece is Piano Sonata in A major, K.331 "Alla Turca", again by Mozart.

Its 3rd movement "Turkish March" is very popular, too, but it is first time for me to play this sonata in public.

I'm excited.

2 Liszt pieces, "Un Sospiro" and "Rigoletto Paraphrase" are my tribute to bicentenary of the birth of the composer.

They have beautiful melody, and they are technically very challenging.

2nd part is Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an exhibition".

It is demanding, not only technically but also about musical imagination.

Mussorgsky composed this piece inspired by pictures of his friend who died young.

It is also very well known as orchestral version by Maurice Ravel.

I learned about the original pictures and also listened to orchestral version, etc., and I came to the conclusion that it was written for piano and I can express the music perfectly on piano.

I know there are very many wonderful recordings by great pianists, but I hope you can hear and enjoy my own "pictures".

9. Are there any favorites on your program?

Yes, all of them.

I have a list of music which I wish to play in public and to share the joy of music with the audience.

I pick up some of them to compose season's program.

So, every piece I play in concert is my favorite.

8. There must be a lot of travel since winning the competition – are there certain things you love or hate about hotels?

The Cliburn Competition opened window to the world for me, and I have had a lot of travel which I had never imagined before the competition.

About hotels, nothing to complain.

American hotels have more space than Japanese.

Travelling itself is generally smooth, unless air flight got cancelled by tornadoes.

Luckily, I'm not bothered by jet lag.

I enjoy local food and local drink anywhere.

Though, it is challenging to make a balance between keeping myself well and well shaped, because American food has bigger portion than Japanese and I feel like hungry when I completed a concert.

7. Travelling also includes different cultures and food – any memorable meals you'd like to share?

I always trying to have local food.

One of the most memorable food was Arros Negre, Paella cooked with squid ink, which I had in Mallorca island of Spain.

I don't stick to Japanese food during the tour, but one of Sushi restaurant in Charlotte, North Carolina, was memorable.

It is the best Sushi in US so far.

I would like to share with you but I couldn't find it on travel advisor.

6. Your Carnegie Hall debut will be later this season, how are you preparing?

I'm very much excited with it.

I believe the best preparation is to practice.

I'll try to enjoy this experience and I hope the audience enjoy the concert with me.

5. Do you hear from fans since the documentary A Surprise in Texas has been shown?

Yes, I often experience people talk to me at the airport, at the restaurant, and on the street.

In June, I visited Venice, Italy, and had an opportunity to play a piano at one of traditional building.

After I played piano, one lady came to me and said she was from Texas and had watched the film so that she easily recognized me.

4. There are quite a few wonderful cds that you have recorded, from orchestral concerti to the most recent Chopin – what's in store for fans in the next few releases?

Thanks, my next CD is just out in the market.

It is Mussorgsky's Pictures and an Exhibition and 2 Liszt pieces, all of them I'm going to play in San Antonio.

3. Is there repertory you want to record that you haven't yet?

Yes, quite a lot.

I'm planning to make recordings of Mozart in the near future.

Beethoven and Chopin are my lifework and I wish to make records of them time to time.

2. You recently graduated from college – what's next, teaching? Or is there a keyboard hero you would want to study with or play for?

Graduating from college is, like winning the competition, just starting professional career.

I have quite a lot to learn and to study, I can't imagine teaching someone!

I would like to meet and listen to as much wonderful pianists as possible, but it is no less inspiring to play chamber music with great musician and to play concerto with great conductors and orchestras.

1. I've heard the Van Cliburn is a real challenge but a joy, with all aspects of music making – solo, chamber and concerti. How was it for you competing and how has it impacted your life?

Well, Van Cliburn Competition was very much demanding about repertoire.

I have to learn quite a lot of music, solo, chamber, concerto, Classical, Romantic, and Contemporary.

However, the hospitality and atmosphere of the competition were so warm and human, I was able to relax myself and to concentrate on playing piano.

Honestly, I didn't think as I was "competing" at all.

I simply enjoyed playing and sharing great music with such wonderful audience.

Every time I survived the round, I was so happy with the fact that I was given further opportunities to have concerts with them.

By the way, last week (14th and 15th of September), I played duo concert with Ms. Son Yoel-Eum, in Tokyo and in Seoul.

I, and my parents, were impressed with her music during the competition.

I had opportunities to attend her concerts after the competition, but it was first time for me to play "duo" with her.

We played Debussy Petite Suite and Mozart Sonata for 2 piano K.448, and Rachmaninov Tarantelle for encore.

It was very much enjoyable and exciting concert, and I wish if I could do it in the States, too.

with very best wishes,
Nobuyuki Tsujii

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