# Programme notes

### Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

**Piano Sonata No.13 in E-flat major, Op. 27 No. 1 “Quasi una fantasia” (1800-1801)**

Beethoven's two sonatas, Op. 27, completed in 1801-1802, published at the same time in Vienna in 1802. The ‘Moonlight’ sonata is more famous than the No.13 piano sonata. Completed in the same year as the ‘Moonlight’, both sonatas share the same subtitle "Quasi una fantasia," meaning "like a fantasy. These two sonatas gradually broke away from classical form and grew into genuine, new, dramatic piano sonatas that reflect Beethoven's exploration of the formal integrity of the sonata.

The present sonata is dedicated to the wife of Prince von Lichtenstein, who is said to have learnt the piano with Beethoven before her marriage, and to have been his supporter. Between the movements are not marked on the final longitudinal line, is required to play the entire piece of music from beginning to end, all the movements and passages are unified by the same pulsation, the feelings of the whole piece of music to the final movement of the section, fully demonstrated its bold fantasia style meaning and its unique density of musicality. The sonata begins with a beautiful dream in the sunshine, then turns into a joyful activity, returning to the dream again before suddenly entering the storm of the second movement. Soon, it sinks back into the big, meditative world, dancing in joy, revisiting serious meditations at the peak, and leaping into a frenzied crescendo to end the piece. Such a musical performance is enough to show that in this period Beethoven had expanded his inner world into a wide realm.

The first movement, Andante - Allegro - Andante. It begins with a soft Andante theme. Entering the Allegro the music changes and suddenly begins with a strong energy, making a drastic change in intensity. There is a strong contrast with the peaceful atmosphere of the Andante. The third part is a variation of the first part repeated. The second movement, Allegro molto e vivace. This is actually a Scherzo piece. The middle section is in A major, in two-part form, and the third section is a variation of the first, with a legato in the right hand and a staccato in the left hand to make the atmosphere more anxious than in the first section. It ends with a powerful cadenza and leads directly into the third movement. Third movement, Adagio con espressione, in A-flat major. This is a lyrical poem full of deep emotion. The first section is a steady eight-bar theme. This is followed by a flourish as if awakening from a meditation and then by a very fast section in E-flat major. In the fourth movement, Allegro vivace, the piece continues with a rondo in which the two themes take turns appearing in different ways, and the piece ends on a powerful note.

### Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

**Piano Sonata No.2 in g minor, Op.22 (1833-1838)**

Schumann composed three piano sonatas during his lifetime. Among them, the Piano Sonata No. 2 in G minor is the most passionate and youthful. Its music is full of Schumann's unique enthusiasm, and it is the closest to the classical sonata style in its musical structure, which makes it a great masterpiece of the Romantic piano sonata. Critic Grillparzer said that Schumann "created for himself a new and ideal world in which he could revel without fear". Schumann described himself as "an artist who dares to fantasise". In this work, Schumann describes the changes in his inner activities as he looks forward to the presence of a distant lover. Piano Sonata No. 2 in g minor was composed between 1833 and 1838, during which time Schumann fell in love with Clara Wieck, and then fell into the great pain and suffering brought about by the emotional distress, so this work is deeply influenced by Clara, and is full of passionate and fanciful feelings.

The first movement, in the key of G minor, adopts semiquaver note accompaniment pattern to express Schumann's eagerness to see Clara. The mood is sometimes subdued, sometimes agitated; sometimes tender, sometimes shifting into an anxious emotional state. This movement uses fragmentary motivation to keep the romantic feelings moving and developing. The second movement, Andantino, in C major, is a variation on a theme taken from Schumann's song “Im Herbste". The third movement, in G minor, is a light and fantastical Scherzo. The fourth movement, in g minor, is a rondo with stormy sweep.

### Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983)

### Danzas Argentinas Op.2 (1937)

### As the first piano piece composed by Ginastera, Danzas Argentina has a strong Argentine national character, while incorporating a new type of creative approach that makes the piece vibrant and mysterious again. No. 1, Danza del viejo boyero means Dance of the old cowherd, No. 2, Danza de la moza donosa means Dance of the graceful maiden. These two pieces describes two fragments of the Argentine nomadic people. In 'Danza del viejo boyero', elements of the Argentinean folk Marambo are incorporated into the suite, thus giving the dance a complex and fast tempo, which is usually presented in 6/8 beats. 'Danza de la moza donosa' is the most elegant melody and also the most frequently performed, coming from the traditional Argentine samba, whose tempo is generally between slow or medium.

### Gao Ping (1970-)

### Dance Fury-Homage to Astor Piazzolla (2000)

As a prominent figure in the world of tango music, Astor Piazzolla's influence has been felt in many other genres beyond his own. One such example is the work of Chinese composer Gao Ping, whose piano composition "Dance Fury-Homage to Astor Piazzolla" draws heavily from Piazzolla's musical elements and style. “Dance Fury” is a solo piano work with a strong tango flavor. It is a work for solo piano written by Gao Ping who was inspired by the performance of the Astor Piazzolla Tango ensemble. In this work Gao Ping does not just imitate Piazzolla's tango style but adds his musical approach. It is a work that differs from Piazzolla's tango music. It has a wide range of musical materials and an international perspective. The performance technique is difficult, the music is free and spontaneous, with a strong Astor Piazzolla’s tango style. The score of the piano work “Dance Fury” shows many special rhythmic, stylistic and harmonic elements that demonstrate Gao Ping's absorption of and homage to the unique musical style of Astor Piazzolla.