



Esther Yoo is set for 10-concert debut tour of Australia with the Z.E.N. Trio (10-27 August 2022)

‘Articulate, intelligent and self-possessed, she is so much more than a technical virtuoso,’ *The Strad*, August 2021

Esther Yoo used the Covid pandemic’s enforced break to reflect on everything from the cultivation of good mental health to the meaning and purpose of being a musician. The Korean-American violinist learned countless invaluable lessons during lockdown. She’s set to apply them in practice to a forthcoming schedule that opens with a ten-concert tour of Australia with the Z.E.N. Trio (10-27 August 2022), complete with the world premiere performance of a piano trio by the Australian composer and violist Matt Laing, the intensely powerful Piano Trio in F-sharp minor by Arno Babadjanian, and masterworks by Brahms and Dvořák.

The Z.E.N. Trio began life in 2015 when Esther Yoo formed a chamber music partnership with fellow BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists pianist Zhang Zuo, better known as Zee Zee, and cellist Narek Hakhnazaryan. Their credits since include concerts at leading venues in the UK, Europe and China, a six-city North American tour and two albums for Deutsche Grammophon. Musica Viva Australia invited them to make their Australian debut and commissioned Matt Laing to create a new work for the group’s national tour. In addition to Laing’s score, the Z.E.N. Trio’s programmes will feature either Brahms’s Piano Trio No.1 in B major Op.8 or Dvořák’s Piano Trio No.4 in E minor Op.90 ‘Dumky’ and Babadjanian’s romantic three-movement Piano Trio, completed in 1952 soon after its young Armenian pianist-composer was awarded the Stalin Prize.

Esther Yoo looks forward to the Z.E.N. Trio’s trip to Australia and the opportunity it provides for three musicians and friends to rehearse and perform together for the first time since Covid lockdown restrictions were imposed in March 2020. “We’re very excited about the upcoming tour and the chance it gives for us to work together again,” she comments. “I’ve only been to Australia once before and have wanted to explore more of it ever since. The tour takes us across the country and will be a great introduction for us to Australian audiences. We’re happy to be performing the Babadjanian Piano Trio again, having recorded it for Deutsche Grammophon a few years back. It’s a brilliant piece that deserves to be so much better known.”

The Z.E.N. Trio’s second album for Deutsche Grammophon, *Burning through the Cold*, was released in October 2020, during the pandemic. Praised by *The Daily Telegraph* as “an impressive release for a Trio which will surely go far,” the recording couples the Babadjanian Piano Trio with Shostakovich’s Piano Trio No.2 and also includes Khachaturian’s *Sabre Dance* and an original transcription of Rachmaninov’s *Vocalise* by Gayane Akhnazaryan and the Z.E.N. Trio.

For Esther Yoo, Covid became a time for reflection and re-evaluation. Her initial response to the pandemic was ruled by anxiety about the future and thoughts about how long it would be before things returned to ‘normal’. “As time passed, I began to look at things differently,” she recalls. “As a busy performer, practice had always been for a purpose; it wasn’t necessarily an end in itself. Suddenly there was an empty space in the calendar and the question ‘What do I practise for?’ You go back to the basics of the physical work of practice and the mental approach to music – and to life! It made me think about every aspect of how I am living. I was able to build a different relationship with my instrument, which became my only friend during five two-week periods of strict quarantine when I returned to Korea after trips away for performances. It was just me and my violin, which became more part of me. Those quarantine periods helped me cultivate a more natural conversation with the instrument. I want to carry what I learned then into the future, to be less anxious about the work I need to do and enjoy this renewed clarity and purpose within me.”

www.estheryooviolin.com
www.zen-trio.com

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Wednesday 10 – 27 August 2022

Z.E.N. TRIO AUSTRALIA TOUR

[Tour information](#)

Esther Yoo violin | **Narek Hakhnazaryan** cello | **Zhang Zuo** piano

Programme 1

Brahms Piano Trio No.1 in B major, Op.8

Matt Laing New Work

Babadjanian Piano Trio in F-sharp minor

Programme 2

Babadjanian Piano Trio in F-sharp minor

Matt Laing New Work

Dvořák Piano Trio No.4 in E minor, Op. 90 'Dumky'

Wednesday 10 August 2022, 7.30pm

Macquarie Conservatorium, Dubbo

[Event page](#)

Programme 1

Friday 12 August 2022, 7.30pm

Hobart Town Hall, Hobart

[Event page](#)

Programme 2

Saturday 13 August 2022, 7pm

Melbourne Recital Centre, Melbourne

[Event page](#)

Programme 2

Monday 15 August 2022, 7.30pm

Perth Concert Hall

[Event page](#)

Programme 2

Thursday 18 August 2022, 7pm

Australian National University, Canberra

[Event page](#)

Programme 2

Saturday 20 August 2022, 2pm

Monday 22 August 2022, 7pm

City Recital Hall, Sydney

[Event page](#)

Programme 1 (Saturday)

Programme 2 (Monday)

Tuesday 23 August 2022, 7pm
Melbourne Recital Centre, Melbourne
[Event page](#)

Programme 1

Thursday 25 August 2022, 7.30pm
Adelaide Town Hall, Adelaide
[Event page](#)

Programme 2

Saturday 27 August 2022, 7.30pm
Newcastle City Hall, Newcastle
[Event page](#)

Programme 2