



Concerto Conversations

The American-Korean violinist Esther Yoo takes Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E minor on tour to Australia and New Zealand to launch her 2023-24 season

**Yoo makes her debuts with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (7 and 8 September)
and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra (16 September)
with Mendelssohn's beloved score**

"Yoo floats [...] with a moving tendresse that subtly pulls the listener into a magical world of half-whispered correspondences...", *BBC Music Magazine*, March 2023



Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E minor Op.64 has been a faithful companion to Esther Yoo since childhood. It stands among the first pieces she performed with orchestra and has become a keystone of her solo repertoire. She is set to take the work to Australia and New Zealand at the start of the new season, marking a keenly anticipated return to the antipodes after the success of her extensive Australian tour last year with the Z.E.N. Trio. Yoo's itinerary begins on Thursday 7 and Friday 8 September 2023 with her debut performances with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and its Principal Guest Conductor, Xian Zhang, at Melbourne's Hamer Hall. She makes her first trip to New Zealand the following week to perform the Mendelssohn concerto at the Municipal Theatre in the coastal city of Napier with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and Pablo González (Saturday 16 September).

"I'm looking forward to making my debuts with both orchestras and, of course, to visiting New Zealand for the first time," comments Esther Yoo. "I played in Melbourne last August with my friends in the Z.E.N. Trio, so it will be great to return after we had such a fantastic time there. I've never worked with Xian Zhang before, but there's a neat coincidence in that she's Music Director of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and I was born in New Jersey!" Working on Mendelssohn's score ahead of the new season, she adds, evoked strong memories of refreshing her interpretation of Bruch's Violin Concerto in G minor before recording it for Deutsche Grammophon last year.

"Generally, they're among the first concertos one would learn as a young player. That was certainly part of my experience, so I have clear early memories of playing the Mendelssohn. It has always felt like a very friendly and familiar concerto to me, partly because it's one of those approachable pieces I've heard so many times and partly because it's one of those pieces you carry throughout your life. The technical difficulties in this work are not so great that they would prevent a young player from performing it, but they leave room for developing an interpretation over time. It's a question of the ease with which you play the concerto and of the musical meaning you're able to give the technical elements. There are so many things in the score that can be interpreted in fresh ways every time you return to it."

The blend of lyricism and playfulness that runs through Mendelssohn's work reflects the invaluable input of Ferdinand David, concertmaster of the Leipzig Gewandhausorchester, who gave its first performance in 1845. The concerto's diverse singing qualities, informed by David's detailed advice to the composer, have proved central to Esther Yoo's evolving relationship with the piece. "Somehow, I enjoy performing it even more now than I did in the past," she notes. "It's such extraordinarily beautiful music but it also has great elegance and humour. Of course, there are dramatic elements. But this wonderful elegance coats everything and it's important to keep that alive. The lyricism itself is a highlight of the work. You can colour that with vibrato and tonal warmth and make it grow and retract in whatever way you wish. It's very much like singing in that respect."

Esther Yoo draws attention to the concerto's intricate dialogue between the soloist and orchestra and the striking variety of ideas that rise as elements of the conversation. "There's so much spirit across the three movements, different in each case, with the intense lyricism of the first movement, the serenity of the Andante and the playfulness of the finale. I approach the last movement very differently now from how I did when I was younger and more focused on its technical elements. Now it's about enjoying the performance and connecting fully with the orchestra, and sharing that with the audience. This is a piece that I love listening to as an audience member

as much as I enjoy performing it. It's very special to be able to create this atmosphere of shared enjoyment, so I look forward to doing just that in Australia and New Zealand.”

[Website](#) – [Facebook](#) – [Instagram](#) – [YouTube](#)

For press enquiries, please contact:

Barbara Miernik / Rita Grudzień at Valerie Barber PR
barbara@vbpr.co.uk / rita@vbpr.co.uk +44 (0) 7586 8560
www.vbpr.co.uk

We at Valerie Barber PR are committed to protecting your personal information and so we are letting you know that we are storing your email address, work telephone numbers and work postal address on our database so that we can keep you up to date with news on our clients. You can ask us to stop using your information at any time by emailing us at info@vbpr.co.uk. You may also request access to the personal data we have about you, request that any incorrect personal data we have about you be rectified, or request that we erase your personal data. If you have any questions about how we care for and use your personal information please let us know us at info@vbpr.co.uk

Thursday 7 September 2023, 7.30pm & Friday 8 September 2023, 11am

Hamer Hall, Melbourne

[Event link](#) | [Event link](#)

Esther Yoo violin | **Xian Zhang** conductor | **Melbourne Symphony Orchestra**

Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in E minor, Op.64

Saturday 16 September 2023, 7.30pm

Napier Municipal Theatre

[Event link](#)

Esther Yoo violin | **Pablo González** conductor | **New Zealand Symphony Orchestra**

Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in E minor, Op.64