



Comparing Notes

Yeol Eum Son marks her Edinburgh International Festival debut with a typically thought-provoking, uplifting programme, part of a season rich in repertoire diversity and compelling combinations of strikingly different compositions

Korean pianist's forthcoming concerto performances include return to the Residentie Orkest, and debuts with the Oslo Philharmonic and Atlanta Symphony Orchestras

"Yeol Eum Son's performance is infused with her distinctive and thoughtful interpretations: lively and stormy in Mozart's early works; [...] finding whimsical elan in the more mature works. Very elegant and engaging!"
Nürnberger Nachrichten, review of complete Mozart sonatas recordings (Naive, March 2023)



Sonata form and variations on a theme have been central to the classical repertoire for centuries, so much so that they are often taken for granted. Yeol Eum Son is on a mission to show the striking diversity of both genres. The Korean pianist's recitals this year and next, including her debut at this summer's Edinburgh International Festival, offer captivating combinations of works rarely heard together on the same bill. Her 2023-24 season also contains high-profile concerto dates in Europe, Asia and North America, including a return to the Residentie Orkest in The Hague and her debut with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.

Yeol Eum Son's summer schedule started on Saturday 3 June at Amsterdam's Muziekgebouw with a recital of sonatas by Prokofiev and Nikolai Kapustin. The concert's first half featured the former's Piano Sonatas Nos.1-3 while its second half was devoted to the latter's Piano Sonatas Nos.2&4. "Kapustin is not well known in western European countries," says Son. "I really want to promote this composer, because he wrote such attractive and unique music. I like the contrast between Kapustin and Prokofiev and the fact that they were both Russian composers born in Ukraine. This is the first time I've played Kapustin's Fourth Piano Sonata, which is very different from the Second Piano Sonata that I recorded for Onyx Classics. It's more meditative, more abstract and dreamier, more avant-garde than the Second, which has a classical form but a jazzy flavour to the music."

Yeol Eum Son makes the first of two visits to Scotland for a recital at Crail Church, Anstruther as part of this year's East Neuk Festival (30 June). Her programme presents three markedly different takes on the solo sonata. She prepares the ground with Mozart's Fantasy in C minor K.475 before turning to Janáček's haunting Sonata 1.x.1905 ('From the Street'), an impassioned tribute to František Pavlík, a worker bayoneted to death during demonstrations in the composer's home city of Brno. Her recital also includes Mozart's Piano Sonata in C minor K.457 and Kapustin's playful Second Piano Sonata, among the longest of the composer's twenty solo sonatas for the instrument. "The sonata is the most significant of musical forms for pianists," she notes. "Although these three works all have sonata in their titles, they're so different from each other. It's fascinating to hear these pieces from different places and times and by very different composers."

Son is set to make her debut at the Edinburgh International Festival recital on Tuesday 15 August. The first half of her Queen's Hall matinee concert explores the infinite possibilities of variation form, opening with Bizet's brooding *Variations chromatiques*, the composer's last work for solo piano, believed to have been inspired by Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations*. The programme continues with the *Variations on Pierre Rode's 'La Ricordanza'* by Carl Czerny, one of Beethoven's best-known pupils, 'Ricordanza' from Liszt's *Transcendental Etudes* and Charles-Valentin Alkan's effervescent *Variations on a theme of Steibelt* Op.1. Beethoven's technically demanding Piano Sonata No.29 Op.106 'Hammerklavier', among the most profound works in the classical canon, stands alone in the recital's second half.

"The Edinburgh Festival asked me to create a programme around the theme of the hero, so I decided to make something unusual," Son recalls. "I immediately thought of the 'Hammerklavier' when I heard the word 'hero', because the piece represents the spirit of the heroic character. I love this sonata more than any other piano composition! It's an amazing journey to play this piece and so completely rewarding."

History and creativity run in tandem in Yeol Eum Son's recital at TivoliVredenburg in Utrecht on 8 October. Her programme is built from three sonatas written respectively in 1789, 1889 and 1989: Mozart's Piano Sonata in D

major K.576, Scriabin's early Sonata in E-flat minor WoO 19 and Kapustin's Piano Sonata No.2. The first and last works date from revolutionary years, respectively those of the French Revolution and of the Fall of Communism in Eastern Europe. "I wanted to compare three different sonatas written over a period of two-hundred years. They all share common features of the classical sonata, which is why I thought it would be revealing to see how they differ. These things fascinate me!"

Yeol Eum Son travels to Canada to perform one of her signature works, Mozart's Piano Concerto No.20 in D minor K.466, on 10 November with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and its Music Director, Otto Tausk. "This is one of those pieces that I know so well but always feel as if I'm playing for the first time," she notes. "There are so many things to discover each time you perform this music. It's extraordinary how new it becomes, no matter how well you think you know it."

Son's season continues with a return to The Hague following her term as Artist-in-Residence with the Residentie Orkest in the 2022-23 season. She has chosen to perform Ravel's Piano Concerto for the Left Hand for two concerts at the Amare Concertzaal (15&17 December) and one at Rotterdam's De Doelen (16 December), all to be conducted by the orchestra's Chief Conductor, Anja Bihlmaier.

"It's fascinating to compare the Concerto for the Left Hand with Ravel's Piano Concerto in G major," Son comments. "They are almost the opposite of what you'd expect. The G major Concerto, although it's written for two hands, is more minimalist and jewel-like than the virtuoso Left-Hand Concerto, where one hand goes out to conquer the world! I've loved working with the Residentie Orkest over the past year and am delighted to return again this December."

Son joins conductor Eivind Aadland on 4 April to make her debut with the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra with Chopin's Piano Concerto No.2, and then crosses the Atlantic to perform Britten's Piano Concerto in her debut concerts with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra under Jonathon Heyward on 2, 4 & 5 May. "It will be the first time I've played the Britten. I know it from recordings, but never thought about performing it before now. I think this will be a thrilling way for me to make my debut in Atlanta."

Imaginative programming stands at the heart of Yeol Eum Son's second recording for the Naïve label, set for release in early 2024. *Love Music*, made with the Bulgarian-born violinist Svetlin Roussev, the pianist's partner in life as well as in chamber music, sounds romantic echoes of old Vienna and impassioned melodies by Korngold, Richard Strauss and Wagner. The album opens with *Love Music*, Franz Waxman's enchanting arrangement of themes from Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde*, created for the 1947 Warner Brothers film *Humoresque*. It continues with Four Pieces from Erich Wolfgang Korngold's incidental music to Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* and a transcription of 'Marietta's Lied' from Korngold's opera *Die Tote Stadt*, and includes Fritz Kreisler's evergreen *Alt-Wiener Tanzweisen* ('Liebesfreud', 'Liebesleid' and 'Schön Rosmarin'), Richard Strauss's Violin Sonata in E-flat major Op.18 and Leopold Auer's transcription of 'Träume' from Wagner's *Wesendonck-Lieder*.

www.yeoleumson.com - [Facebook](#) - [Instagram](#) - [YouTube](#)

The information in this press release was correct at the time of sending. Please check the organisations' websites and social media for the latest updates.

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Saturday 3 June 2023, 8.15pm
Muziekgebouw, Amsterdam

Yeol Eum Son piano

Prokofiev Piano Sonata No.1

Prokofiev Piano Sonata No.2

Prokofiev Piano Sonata No.3

Kapustin Piano Sonata No.4

Kapustin Piano Sonata No.2

EAST NEUK FESTIVAL
Friday 30 June 2023, 4pm
Craik Parish Church

Yeol Eum Son piano

Mozart Fantasy In C minor K.475
Janáček Sonata 1.X.1905 'From The Street'
Mozart Sonata In C minor K.457
Kapustin Sonata No.2

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL
Tuesday 15 August 2023, 11am
Queen's Hall, Edinburgh

Yeol Eum Son piano

Bizet *Variations chromatiques*
Czerny *Variations on Pierre Rode's Ricordanza*
Liszt 'Ricordanza' from the *Transcendental Etudes*
Alkan *Variations on a Theme of Steibelt*
Beethoven Piano Sonata No.29 Op.106 'Hammerklavier'

CHOPIN: OPEN AIR 2023
Sunday 3 September 2023, 3pm
Georgengarten in Herrenhausen, Hannover

Yeol Eum Son piano | **Theo Plath** bassoon | **Tobias Rokahr** conductor | **Junges Sinfonieorchester Hannover**

Liszt Piano Concerto No.1 in E flat Major

Friday 6 October 2023, 8pm
Musis Arnhem

Yeol Eum Son piano

Mozart Sonata in B flat major K.570
Scriabin Sonata in E flat minor
Mozart Sonata in D major K.576
Kapustin Sonata No.2

Sunday 8 October 2023, 11am
Tivoli Vredenburg, Utrecht

Yeol Eum Son piano

Mozart Sonata No.18 in D major K.576
Scriabin Sonata in E flat minor WoO 19
Kapustin Sonata No.2

Friday 10 November 2023, 7pm
Orpheum, Vancouver

Yeol Eum Son piano | **Otto Tausk** conductor | **Vancouver Symphony Orchestra**

Mozart Piano Concerto No.20 in D minor K.466

Friday 15 December 2023, 8.15pm & Sunday 17 December 2023, 2.15pm Concertzaal Amare, The Hague
Saturday 16 December 2023, 8.15pm Rotterdam De Doelen

Yeol Eum Son piano | **Anja Bihlmaier** conductor | **Residentie Orkest**

Ravel Piano Concerto for the Left Hand

Thursday 4 April 2024, 7pm
Oslo Concert Hall

Yeol Eum Son piano | **Eivind Aadland** conductor | **Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra**

Chopin Piano Concerto No.2

Thursday 2 & Saturday 4 May 2024, 8pm Atlanta Symphony Hall
Sunday 5 May 2024, 3pm Hugh Hodgson Concert Hall, Athens

Yeol Eum Son piano | **Jonathon Heyward** conductor | **Atlanta Symphony Orchestra**

Britten Piano Concerto

Wednesday 12 & Thursday 13 June 2024, 8pm
National Arts Centre, Ottawa

Yeol Eum Son piano | **Joana Carneiro** conductor | **NAC Orchestra**

Prokofiev Piano Concerto No.2