



LOGAN YI HENG CHAN

Orchestral Colour at the Fingertips

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Eighteen-year-old Logan Yi Heng Chan began studying piano at age five in Australia and later trained at the Sydney Conservatorium High School. Recognized in numerous national and international competitions as a pianist, Chan has also expanded his focus to conducting and choral direction. Now pursuing a double degree in Law and Arts at the University of Sydney, he balances academic studies with orchestral projects and ensemble leadership. In this conversation, Chan discusses orchestral transcriptions, discovering the podium, and the collaborative nature of music.

WHAT FIRST SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN MUSIC?

My interest in music was sparked by my parents. Neither of them was trained in music, but both of them held the arts closely in their lives. My mother is an exceptional visual artist who grew up with graphite pencils, just as I did with piano keys. My dad also loves music, and his work in jewelry is no doubt driven by an artistic heart. While neither of them learned music, singing was always around the house from as young as I can remember. I think the combination of these is what first sparked my interest in music.

WHICH COMPOSERS OR PIECES DO YOU MOST ENJOY PLAYING, AND WHY?

It's too difficult to pin down any specific composers that I most enjoy playing: there's something special to find in each composer.



However, Stravinsky's **Petrushka**, as well as Guido Agosti's transcription of Stravinsky's **Firebird** suite, opened me up to the world of piano transcriptions of orchestral works. The attempt to capture such a fervent orchestral might, and its wide swathes of colour, on the piano is infinitely enjoyable. It's such a pleasure to be able to even attempt to recreate such diverse orchestral and instrumental timbres from only your fingertips. It truly unlocks some of the greatest music written for the piano.

Recently, I've been in love with Florian Noack's transcriptions of Tchaikovsky's **Swan Lake**, **Romeo and Juliet** Overture, and the **Polovtsian Dances**—originally written by Borodin.

HOW DID YOU FIRST GET INTERESTED IN CONDUCTING, AND WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT IT?

The Conservatorium High School in Sydney is quite unique, in that every year the Year 11 cohort is given a task to lead their respective house in presenting a 30-minute concert programme. Everything from the programming to the rehearsal process to the conducting is all done by students without any teacher guidance.

I was fortunate enough to be a house captain when I was in Year 11, and worked closely with my peers to craft a programme that would showcase the entire house. It was during this event that I had my first ever conducting experience—conducting my house in the Finale of Tchaikovsky's 5th Symphony.

It was such an eye-opening experience, in that, the more you learn about conducting, the more you realise that it isn't at all about waving your arms about. I learnt how to optimise a rehearsal process that would work for the young students in front of me. I learnt the different nature of each instrument, and the mechanisms that they require to produce a desired sound. Most importantly, I learnt that conducting is a "people" role. As a conductor, you're here to inspire the people in front of you, by working with them to bring the best out of them.

It's this human connection you form with the people you conduct that has kept me conducting to this day. I'm currently a choral director at a church near my area.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY DOING IN YOUR FREE TIME OUTSIDE MUSIC?

I enjoy talking to people. It doesn't exactly matter who, but good conversation is something that I live for; learning about them, and learning about myself in the process. Having the fortune of doing music for a while, as well as now starting a law degree, I'm able to meet some of the most interesting people, and it keeps the world just that much more colourful to me.



WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THE NEXT FEW YEARS?

I'm currently studying a Bachelor of Law and Arts at the University of Sydney. So the next 5 years look like quite a commitment to that degree.

Meanwhile, music looks like working with the church choir every week to sing some of the most beautiful choral music, whilst learning some bucket-list pieces on the piano in my own time. As of last year, I've been with the Australian Youth Orchestra, for their National Music Camps as well as seasonal programmes where applicable. I'm greatly looking forward to those two upcoming seasons in early 2027.

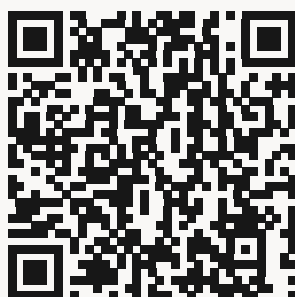
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