

Fredericksburg Music Club, Inc. Presents Yekwon Sunwoo - In Concert September 16, 2018

Yekwon Sunwoo, 2017 Gold Medalist, Van Cliburn International Piano Competition

Gold medalist of the Fifteenth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, 28-year-old pianist Yekwon Sunwoo has been hailed for “his total command over the instrument and its expressiveness” (San Francisco Examiner). A powerful and virtuosic performer, he also, in his own words, “strives to reach for the truth and pure beauty in music,” and hopes to convey those fundamental emotions to audiences.

Born in Anyang, South Korea, Mr. Sunwoo began learning piano at age 8. He gave both his recital and orchestra debuts in 2004 in Seoul before moving to the United States in 2005 to study with Seymour Lipkin at the Curtis Institute of Music. He earned his bachelor’s degree there, his master’s at The Juilliard School with Robert McDonald, and his artist diploma at the Mannes School of Music with Richard Goode. He currently studies under Bernd Goetzke in Hannover. Mr. Sunwoo credits each for their guidance in his artistic development and approach, and honored the late Mr. Lipkin by performing his cadenza during his Semifinal Round performance of the Mozart Piano Concerto in C Major, K. 467.

The first Korean to win Cliburn gold, Mr. Sunwoo launched his debut season in 2017–2018 with invitations to the Aspen, Grand Teton, and Duszynski International Music Festivals. Recitals will take him to Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, and Vancouver, and he undertakes a nine-city tour of the United States with the National Orchestra of Cuba in the spring. In Europe, Mr. Sunwoo makes his United Kingdom concerto debut with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra under Cristian Macelaru, appears in the first full season at the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, and performs in Brussels, Copenhagen, Istanbul, Madrid, Helsingborg, and across Germany. His appearances in Asia include those in Beirut, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and across South Korea.

Record label Decca Gold released Cliburn Gold 2017 two weeks after his Cliburn win, which includes his award-winning performances of Ravel’s *La valse* and Rachmaninoff’s *Second Piano Sonata*.

In previous seasons, Mr. Sunwoo has performed as soloist with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra under Marin Alsop, The Juilliard Orchestra with Itzhak Perlman at Avery Fisher Hall, Houston Symphony Orchestra with James Feddeck, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra with Leonard Slatkin and Nicholas McGegan, National Orchestra of Belgium, Sendai Philharmonic Orchestra, and others. He has appeared in recital in Hamarikyu Asahi Hall in Tokyo, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall in London, Radio France and Salle Cortot in Paris, Kumho Art Hall in Seoul, and throughout South Korea, Germany, Switzerland, Prague, and Morocco.

An avid chamber musician, his partners have included the Jerusalem and Brentano String Quartets, violinists Benjamin Beilman and Ida Kafavian, cellists Edgar Moreau, Gary Hoffman, and Peter Wiley, and pianist Anne-Marie McDermott. He has toured Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Panama with the Kumho Asiana Cultural Foundation, performed for the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center’s Inside Chamber Music Lectures, and been invited to the Summit Music, Bowdoin International, and Toronto Summer Music Festivals.

In addition to the Cliburn gold medal, Mr. Sunwoo has won first prizes at the 2015 International German Piano Award in Frankfurt, the 2014 Vendome Prize held at the Verbier Festival, the 2013 Sendai International Music Competition, and the 2012 William Kapell International Piano Competition.

A self-proclaimed foodie, Mr. Sunwoo enjoys finding pho in each city he visits and takes pride in his own homemade Korean soups.