

## **Learning Report**

### **Engagement with the ensemble**

I and another music major in HKU, Harris, have formed the Team 0 Piano Duet since our first collaboration in 2017. As recommended by a friend of ours, we decided to participate in the Four-Hands Class of the 19<sup>th</sup> Osaka International Music Competition in Japan. Knowing that the competition is prestigious and highly-competitive, we were determined to devote ourselves into practicing and to strive our excellence in creating our music. When it comes to repertoire selection, I have proposed to play the “Andante e Allegro Brillante, op.92”, a piano duet piece written by the German composer F. Mendelssohn in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, with contrasts of sublime, slow opening as well as fast, sparkling melodies.

The convention of piano duet consists of ‘primo’ and ‘secondo’, which the former usually plays notes in the higher register of the piano and the latter plays the lower register. After several discussions, considering our perceptions and understandings to piano playing, I decided to play the ‘secondo’ while Harris did the ‘primo’. Since then, we have been meeting at least twice a week to practice and to refine our performance, not only drilling the arduous technical spots in the piece, but also refining our musicianship and ensemble-ship – how to sound like we are playing in unity. After submitting our DVD recording as entry to the preliminary round in July, one month later, I was told that we had got into the final round! Despite being overjoyed, we had then devoted our time and heart to polish our music in a more rigorous manner.

### **Reflection on the learning activity**

The most vital learning outcome of the competition is enhancing our musicianship and broadening our horizons toward music performance. As a musician, there always will be times where we have to perform music with our fellows playing different instruments. Through this competition, it not only serves as an opportunity for us to play together as a group, but also enhances our level of musicianship – to listen to one another and to make responses in music through our minds, gestures and fingers.

Before joining this competition, both I and Harris have never participated in overseas music events, this is the first time we listened and competed with contestants coming from various countries such as Japan and South Korea. There was a gala concert held after the competition, where winners from different classes (including us) would perform in the cultural hall of the Takatsuki *Gendai Gekijo*, a renowned performance venue in Osaka, Japan. Some of the performances left us in awe, with their mastery of techniques in playing the instrument and their mature interpretations. We realized that as a musician in Hong Kong, we must continue to learn and enhance our skills in piano.

Apart from the major learning outcomes, our interpretation of music has been enhancing since we started reading the scores. Worrying about our interpretation is not delicate and smooth enough, we have asked our respective piano teachers to offer several coaching sessions to us. I sincerely hope our team will not be satisfied with this first-prize and being “too-proud”, but to cherish and learn from this precious experience, then to further improve ourselves to be better musicians in Hong Kong.

