

Italian pianist tunes to lower frequency at Beijing concert

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A piano recital usually involves a quiet venue, a musical instrument placed in the center of the stage and a player who moves the audience with perfect music.

But the audience was in for a surprise at the concert hall of the University of Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing in April, when they saw two grand pianos placed on the stage. Italian pianist Sebastiano Brusco demonstrated how science can be used to complement art in his performances at the university over two days.

The two pianos are tuned to different frequencies, one using the modern A440 pitch standard with a frequency of 440 hertz and the other with the classical 432-hertz tuning, a renowned advocate of which was 19th-century Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi. The Beijing concert was also a rare opportunity for the Chinese audience to attend a live concert with a piano tuned at 432 hertz.

Prior to the last century, different frequencies were adopted in tuning musical instruments.

In 1939 and 1955, respectively, the British Standards Institute and the

International Organization for Standardization adopted A440 as the global standard.

Brusco played the works of three classical masters, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Franz Schubert and Frederic Chopin, and accompanied Italian songs performed by Chinese tenor Zhang Mingyu.

The concerts were presented in a format based on the era and mood of each individual piece. Brusco chose between the pianos to achieve the ideal effect. He also performed excerpts of some compositions on both pianos, so the audience could compare and contrast, deciding which tuning they prefer.

Brusco says that the 432-hertz music "has less energy and is much more relaxed".

"To me, 440 hertz goes into the mind and the brain, but 432 hertz goes directly into the heart," he says.

Born in Rome in 1969, Brusco learned to play the piano at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena, Italy. His fondness for chamber music led him to initiate the Concerti della Sagrestia del Borromini music festival 10 years ago.

Brusco says he discovered the charm of tuning his piano to 432 hertz about five years ago, when his piano tuner suggested he should try



Apart from his solo piano performances, Sebastiano Brusco (left) also accompanies Italian songs performed by Chinese tenor Zhang Mingyu at a recent show in Beijing. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

a lower frequency. He adds that the frequency allows him more space to think about the music he is playing and he feels less tired while doing so. He has since devoted research to 432 hertz, particularly using it to reinterpret Mozart's pieces.

"The frequency gives more depth to Mozart's pieces for the listeners," he says.

"It is also good for all melodic and tonal music unless you need to have

more energy and a strict rhythm," Brusco says.

Zhang, who has been studying singing at Italy's Luigi Cherubini Conservatory of Music since 2014, says, "I have seen many Italian pianist virtuosos over my years of studying in Europe, but it is my first time meeting such an excellent pianist who focuses on chamber music and the interpretation of Mozart."

At the Beijing concert, Zhang first

introduced the Chinese meaning of the Italian songs he performed, while Brusco provided the background story.

The concert was part of the university's Sound of Spring festival, which is a seasonal event of art and music where lectures and exhibitions are held as well as concerts.

"We aimed to combine science and art by using the two pianos set at different frequencies, and introduced the story of each piece of music, besides answering students' questions," Zhang says.

Though primarily focused on science education, the university puts emphasis on bringing science and the arts closer, a concept promoted there by former professor of the university and physicist Tsung-dao Lee.

Zhu Wei, executive director and professor at the university's Tsung-dao Lee Science and Art Center, is in charge of this concert's planning.

"The concert illustrates the utilization of science in art. Science can serve art and present a higher performance standard. This also shows how science and art are closely connected," Zhu says, adding that he would urge the school's future scientists to develop an interest in the arts, so that they can apply creative thinking to scientific research.



To me, 440 hertz (frequency of music produced on a tuned piano) goes into the mind and the brain, but 432 hertz goes directly into the heart."

Sebastiano Brusco,
Italian pianist

CHINA DAILY of March 2019.

• by Fulvio Creux (after a piano recital in Rome) January 16th 2017

"I was very impressed by the execution of the three Mozart Sonatas performed by Sebastiano Brusco. A Mozart" different "from what listening habits, even of the greatest, have accustomed us.

Every phrase, every musical period was thought of as a world in its own right, coherent with the universe to which it belonged.

A touch capable of restoring many unexpected nuances and which, after the pianissimo, still managed to echo the pianissimo and, in this, the "feminine" endings.

Things that can be done only if in possession of a thought that knows what it is, and a technique capable of transmitting this thought. Here this "Mozart not Mozart" (I repeat, compared to the usual styles) became a real "Mozart never listened to" (at least by me), without turning into another author. The incessant applause at the end of each song was the best testimony of two things:

- 1) that Sebastiano Brusco was able to say something personal but true (without trad ire the author)
- 2) that the public (even if not necessarily expert) understands when they are facing something important: art is not for the few, it is for everyone... just listen to it! "

• Music Commentary – By Christopher Axworthy

"Two Mozart Piano Concertos played with great sensibility by Sebastiano Brusco with string quintet

was given a beautiful sparkling performance the conductor/soloist playing without the score as Mozart himself would have done – probably improvising the cadenza too.

The highlight of the two concertos is without doubt the beautifully simple but poignant slow movements played with a freedom and sensibility that only a chamber music ensemble can allow. The very fine Harmoniae Aureae Ensemble followed every note of the soloist as they listened so intently in true chamber music fashion. It was in the slow episodes of the last movement of K 415 where moments of sublime beauty were reached that only the genius of Mozart could capture with so few notes meaning so much.”

- **Morgunblaðið By Ríkarður Örn Pálsson 22.07.2008**

"the Brusco's playing is exceptionally beautiful ..." (After an interpretation of Mozart's quartet in Reykja

- **Vitadidonna – Concert of 2010 the theater Keiros – Stefano Maria Palmitessa**

" In the quartet with piano K 493 we had the opportunity to appreciate the piano skills of Sebastiano Brusco, who trained with Maestro Aldo Ciccolini, wonderfully set in the jewel of the musicality of four strings"

- **UMBRIALEFT (27/08/2012) A. Allegretti**

Sebastiano Brusco enchants the classical musicfestival of Castiglione del Lago

"Convey emotions, tofly the minds of everybody in the immense skies of dreams"... the professionalism of the young pianist expressed through his fingers, gave birth to an authentic magical night. The young musician has perform ed works by Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms and Chopin. Works very well-known but every one felt strong the creativity of the artist, which gave to the pieces something unique, particularly engaging. A cascade of melodies, of real virtuosity, created a magical atmosphere inside the walls of one of the most beautiful and rich of his tory buildings of Umbria ... "

- **Sandro Cappelletto – after listening the CD of Mozart's Concerto Kv414 for piano and orchestra**

Sebastiano Brusco's Mozart is very original in his very personal choices of phrasing, in his rhythmic shifts, in his sensitive and varied use of dynamics. In the sensitivity of the breaths in the relationship between soloist and orchestra, in the liberties he takes in the cadences, in the mastery of the expressiveness of the trills. ... confirming himself as an always engaging interpreter.

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- **URBAN POST** “Mozart a 432 Hertz, When the Music harmonize with the Soul”
by *Andrea Monaci* 30/03/2021

“What makes the recording special is the use of the Scientific Tuning, in which the "A" is tuned to 432 Hertz and therefore refers to the golden section, generating a harmonic and enveloping frequency, capable of restoring a more natural and rich in nuances, able to completely immerse the audience in the music.

The intonation and frequency of these interpretations accompany listeners in a timeless atmosphere, in total balance with the frequencies of the human body and mind, but above all in line with the original sounds sought by Mozart, recreated through the talent of the musicians of the “Harmoniae Aureae orchestra”, which since their debut in 2019 have continued to pay homage to the genius and poetry of the Salzburg composer.

- **The debate on 432 Hertz, the golden frequency that would put in harmonious contact with the Universe.**

For a long time there has been debate on the scientific nature of the claims of those who consider 432 Hertz as the only musical frequency capable of putting man in harmonious contact with the Universe. Pseudoscientific theories aside, many internationally renowned musicians have begun to tune their instruments on the frequency of 432 Hertz instead of the usual 440.

As the interpreter cited in this article did. And countless listeners, including former classical musicians like the writer, appreciate this new approach to the classical repertoire, particularly when applied to masterpieces like the complete Mozart catalog.



Why this focus on the 432 Hertz frequency?

Beyond any technical-scientific dispute, many compositions made around 432 Hz themes have an undeniable charm and are able to stimulate positive sensations and not only in the most sensitive listeners. Not only that, even those who suffer from annoying hearing disorders, such as perennial tinnitus, find it beneficial. Feelings?

It can be and there would be nothing wrong with that. The writer was able to appreciate the benefits of music at 432 Hz, without entering into considerations of a qualitative nature or whatever.”

- **By Cheng Yuezhu | CHINADAILY.com.cn | 2019-11-27**

In 2019 a concert series that originated in Italy, recently came to China for two performances in Huangshan, Anhui province, and Beijing. Founded by Italian flutist Andrea Ceccomori, the concerts aim to promote peace around the globe through music. For the concert's China premiere, Ceccomori and Italian pianist Sebastiano Brusco first went to Huangshan University on Nov 13 and then performed at the University of Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing on Nov 16.

At Huangshan University, the musicians cooperated with teachers of flute and piano from its School of Arts, and gifted an olive baton to lecturer Zhang Biao.

At the University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, the olive baton was conferred to professor Zhu Wei, who participated in planning the concert.

The concerts included classic music pieces by Western classical masters such as Mozart and Beethoven, works composed by the two Italian musicians, and also well-known Chinese pieces such as the Butterfly Lovers. These are Ceccomori's first performances in China, and Brusco came to China for a one-month tour in six cities earlier this year.