

Music x Food

written by Phoebe Wu

SONATA FOR VIOLIN & PIANO NO.5 – 1ST MVT. (SPRING SONATA) – BEETHOVEN

Spring Vegetable Garden Tart / Citrus Coconut & Kombu Cream

The pairing of “spring” welcomes a new beginning, capturing the first breath of warmth after a long, silent frost. The opening flourish gives birth to a celebratory motif that develops throughout the piece—parallel to how the crisp vegetables spotlight the dynamic seasonality and locality of our present. As the piano gently echoes the melody, the luscious cream softly cushions the delicate vegetables. The graceful runs sprout through the fresh spring breeze, brought to life by zesty citrus and herbaceous greens. Beneath this vibrancy lies the grounding earthiness of kombu—where harmonies branch from tender sprouts into towering trees. Edible flowers crown the experience, mirroring how the music itself blossoms—timid buds unfurling into full, radiant expression. With these first notes and nibbles, we invite you to join us on this unfolding journey of transformation.

ESTRELLITA (LITTLE STAR) – PONCE / ARR. HEIFETZ

Pot of Mushroom “Soil” / Cocoa Truffle Custard / Peashoots

Unrequited love. It is a melody that lingers long after the music has stopped. It is the warmth of the sun reaching for a flower that will never turn to face it. It is the echo of a whispered confession swallowed by the wind. It is the bittersweet, heart-quenching sentiment of longing that “Estrellita” so poignantly expresses. The dish at first glance appears purely sweet, yet its depth, complexity, and umami clasp the layers of emotion that accompany desire left unfulfilled. It is not just unreciprocated romance. It is the child reaching for a parent’s affection that never fully arrives, the friend who gives endlessly yet remains an afterthought, and the dream pursued with passion but never quite grasped. Yet, it is not rejection—it is redirection. Like a fallen fruit that never finds a hand to hold it, it returns to the earth, nourishing the soil for something greater to grow.

BUTTERFLY LOVERS’ VIOLIN CONCERTO (SELECTIONS) – CHEN & HE

Harissa Soy-Glazed Yellow Squash / Fermented Tofu Squash Tartare / Cucumber Rose / Sesame-Zaatar Candied Delicata Squash

The iconic Butterfly Lovers’ Concerto is reimagined as an assortment of four Chinese cold plates, representing a miniature journey—an appetizer, entrée, palate cleanser, and dessert—within a larger multi-course tasting. This modern take on the tragic folktale goes beyond its confines of feudal sacrifice, instead embracing its universal themes: self-discovery, conflict, and metamorphosis. Each mini course is each crafted from a vegetable in the squash family that represents different stages of maturity. The expressive theme lands on spring zucchini prepared with bold and sweet seasonings. As tension arises, roasted yellow squash arrives with a medley of ingredients in chaotic harmony, coated in a sharp, funky, and spicy fermented tofu cream. The refreshing pickled cucumbers bring a moment of stillness before the final, soaring climax. Finally, the dessert-like candied squash captures the bittersweet glory and quiet relief of the transformation fulfilled, a tender echo of all that came before. Across the four bites and sections of the piece, we sprout through the stages of metamorphosis: the innocence of youth, the trials of love and ambition, the turbulence of struggle, and the transcendence into something greater.

SONGS MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME – DVORAK / ARR. KREISLER

Deviled Tea Egg / Noodle Bird's Nest / Chili Crisp Aioli

Songs My Mother Taught Me—alongside a reimagined tea egg—evokes bittersweet nostalgia, love, and a deep connection to one's roots. For me, the tea egg is a bite-sized piece of home—the one thing my mother always made, the iconic after school snack at my local 7-11 in Taiwan, and one of the first dishes I ever learned to cook. But as much as we try to remember and recreate, time only flows in one direction. We can only reflect, cherish, and carry pieces of home with us as we continue forward. Hence, I chose to reinterpret this traditional snack in an unconventional way. The egg white remains, but its yolk is scooped out, infused with layers of aromatics, then whipped into something more complex before being returned to its shell. Reminiscent of our own journeys in life—what was once simple is shaped by time and experience, becoming something new yet deeply tied to its origins. As we shatter the crispy, delicate nest cradling our love for home, we remind ourselves that despite affection for the past and apprehension for the future, we must eventually take flight.

VARIATIONS ON AN ORIGINAL THEME – WIENIAWSKI

Textures of Onion: Caramelized Onion Custard / Onion Crisps / Onion Petal / Sumac Pickled Onions / Spiced Onion Jam

Wieniawski's dazzling Variations on an Original Theme is reimagined through "Textures of Onion"—exploring transformation through depth, contrast, and versatility. As Wieniawski takes a singular theme and reinvents it through violinistic brilliance, this dish showcases the many dimensions of a single ingredient through the usage of various shapes and colors, alongside the progression of heat and time. The interplay of textures and flavors—velvety emulsions, juicy crisp, shattering crunch, punchy acidity, and tender sweetness—mirrors the evolving musical character of each variation. The welcoming theme is reflected in the standing onion petal, providing the structural framework that holds everything together. The cheeky, devilish first variation comes through in the crisp crumble, adding playful textural contrast. The second variation—with its elegance and grace—finds a counterpart in soft, creamy custard. The third variation—rich and nuanced—takes form in the deep complexity of the spiced onion jam. Finally, the virtuosic and flamboyant finale bursts forth with the vibrant and zingy pickled onion. Just as one melody takes on new shapes and one ingredient morphs into new identities, we too grow, adapt, and reinvent ourselves, discovering new facets while holding onto our core essence.

CINEMA PARADISO (LOVE THEME) – MORRICONE / ARR. WALKER

Rum-Chai Tiramisu / Rose & Cardamom / Candied Lemon & Pistachios

Just as the Italian film "Cinema Paradiso" reflects on love, loss, and nostalgia, the classic Italian tiramisu is reimagined through a modern lens—transforming familiar comfort into something deeply layered. The warming spices mirror the depth of cherished memories, while the slight bitterness from tea leaves capture the complexity of life's bittersweet farewells. Accompanied by the memorial presence of roses, the tipsy haze from the rum evokes a sense of blurred beauty—like memories softened and fermented through time. As our evening together comes to an end, the final course serves both as a farewell and a reflection—an acknowledgement of chaotic times and oncoming change. Like the film, it reminds us that people, places, and memories that shape us never leave—they live on as part of who we become. Transformation is ongoing, and goodbyes are never truly final. Let this dessert be a tribute to the journeys that continue after the curtains fall.