

## AWADAGIN PRATT, PIANO

**PHILIP GLASS**

(b. 1937)

*“Opening” from Glassworks*

**FRANÇOIS COUPERIN**

(1668-1733)

*Les barricades mystérieuses*

**PĒTERIS VASKS**

(b. 1946)

*Castillo Interior*

Arranged for solo piano by Peteris Vasks and  
commissioned by the Art of the Piano  
Foundation for Awadagin Pratt

**FRED HERSCH**

(b. 1955)

*Nocturne for Left Hand Alone*

**SERGEI RACHMANINOFF**

(1873-1943)

*Prelude in D Major, Op. 23, no. 4*

**FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN**

(1810-1849)

*Nocturne in B Major, Op. 62, no. 1*

**PYOTR ILYICH  
TCHAIKOVSKY**

(1840-1893)

Arr. M. Petnev (b. 1957)

*“Intermezzo” from The Nutcracker Suite*

Arranged for solo piano  
by M. Pletnev  
b. 1957

*Please note that the first half of the program is performed without pause*

### INTERMISSION

**FRANZ LISZT**

(1811-1886)

*Sonata in B Minor, S.178*

Lento assai - Allegro energico  
Andante sostenuto - Allegro  
Energico - Stretta quasi presto -  
Allegro moderato

Bösendorfer 280VC concert grand piano is provided by Yamaha Corporation  
of America in association with Classic Pianos Denver.

*This performance sponsored by CPR Classical*



**AWADAGIN  
PRATT, *piano***

## AWADAGIN PRATT

Awadagin Pratt is acclaimed for his musical insight and intense performances, both in recital and with symphony orchestras.

Born in Pittsburgh, Awadagin Pratt began studying piano and violin at an early age, and, at 16, entered the University of Illinois. He subsequently enrolled at the Peabody Conservatory of Music, where he became the first student in the school's history to receive diplomas in three performance areas – piano, violin, and conducting.

In 1992, Pratt won the Naumburg International Piano Competition and two years later was awarded an Avery Fisher Career Grant. Since then, he has played numerous recitals throughout the U.S. including performances at Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles, Chicago's Orchestra Hall, and the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. His many orchestral performances include appearances with the New York Philharmonic, the Minnesota Orchestra, and the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Indianapolis, Atlanta, St. Louis, National, and Detroit symphonies. Summer festival engagements include appearances at Ravinia, Blossom, Wolf Trap, Caramoor, Aspen, and the Hollywood Bowl.

An experienced conductor, Pratt has conducted programs with the Toledo, Vancouver, Winston-Salem, and Santa Fe symphonies, the New Mexico Philharmonic, the Northwest Sinfonietta, the Concertante di Chicago, and several orchestras in Japan. Recent engagements include playing with and conducting the Chamber Orchestra of Pittsburgh, conducting performances of *Porgy and Bess* with the Greensboro Opera, and conducting music of jazz great Ornette Coleman with Bang on a Can at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. In 2023 he began his tenure as Music Director of the Miami Valley Symphony Orchestra in Ohio.

A great believer in working with young people, Pratt has created a program called “Black in America” in which he tells about his encounters with the police, starting as a

teenager and continuing through his post-graduate studies and into adulthood. His narrative is interspersed with live music performed by Pratt and students, followed by a panel discussion regarding the state of race in America today. Michelle Bauer Carpenter produced a documentary about the “Black in America” program that aired on 90 PBS stations earlier this year.

Pratt’s recordings for Angel/EMI include *A Long Way From Normal*, an all-Beethoven Sonata CD, *Live From South Africa*, *Transformations*, and an all-Bach disc with the St. Lawrence String Quartet. His most recent recordings are the Brahms Sonatas for Cello and Piano with Zuill Bailey for Telarc, and a recording of the music of Judith Lang Zaimont with the Harlem String Quartet.

Pratt is also the founder and Artistic Director of the Art of the Piano and produces a festival every spring featuring performances and conversations with well-known pianists and piano faculty members. In the spring of 2024, he organized the first Nina Simone Piano Competition for Black Pianists in collaboration with the Cincinnati Symphony, the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and the Art of the Piano Festival. The competition was made possible by a generous grant from the Sphinx Organization.

Through the Art of the Piano Foundation and inspired by a stanza from T. S. Eliot’s *Four Quartets*, Mr. Pratt commissioned seven composers—Jessie Montgomery, Alvin Singleton, Judd Greenstein, Tyshawn Sorey, Jonathan Bailey Holland, Paola Prestini, and Pēteris Vasks—to compose works for piano, strings, and the vocal ensemble Roomful of Teeth. Jessie Montgomery’s concerto *Rounds*, which Pratt has played with more than thirty orchestras including the Boston, Chicago, St. Louis, Atlanta, Baltimore, Indianapolis, and Milwaukee symphonies, won a 2024 Grammy for Best Contemporary Classical Composition. All seven works were recorded in the summer of 2022 with the chamber orchestra *A Far Cry* for New Amsterdam Records.

In July 2023, Pratt joined the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music as Professor of Piano. For 19 years, he had been Professor of Piano and Artist in Residence at the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati.

In recognition of his achievements in the field of classical music, he has received the Distinguished Alumni Award from Johns Hopkins University as well as honorary doctorates from the Berklee College of Music and Illinois Wesleyan. He has delivered commencement addresses at those institutions in addition to the Peabody Conservatory.

Awadagin Pratt appears by arrangement with CM Artists. Recordings are available on the Angel/EMI Classics and Telarc labels. Awadagin Pratt is a Yamaha artist. For more information, please visit [www.awadagin.com](http://www.awadagin.com).

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## NOTES

### PHILIP GLASS: "OPENING" FROM GLASSWORKS

#### IN BRIEF

**BORN:** January 31, 1937, Baltimore, Maryland

**COMMISSION:** Originally written as a commission for CBS Records in 1981

#### **MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC**

**PERFORMANCE:** Tonight marks the first performance of this work on our series.

**DURATION:** 6 minutes

Philip Glass's name is practically synonymous with minimalism. He studied violin and flute as a child, not concentrating on piano until his late teens. After gaining early admittance to the University of Chicago, he earned a degree in mathematics and philosophy before moving on to graduate study in composition at the Juilliard School. In college, he had flirted with serialism. Working with Vincent Persichetti, Darius Milhaud, and William Bergsma in New York, he found himself drawn to nonconformists like Charles Ives, Virgil Thomson, and Harry Partch. Still seeking his own musical persona, he moved to Paris to work with the legendary Nadia Boulanger. In Paris, he became acquainted with Indian music through the work of Ravi Shankar. Eventually, techniques from the Himalayas and Northern Africa found their way into his original music. Back in the United States in the mid-1970s, Glass established a reputation through his scores for the theatre troupe Mabou Mines and his own Philip Glass Ensemble. His opera *Einstein on the Beach* (1976) established his international reputation.

"Opening" is the first movement of *Glassworks*, a six-movement composition from 1982. At that time, Glass wrote:

This music was written for the recording studio, though a number of the pieces soon found their way into the (Philip Glass) Ensemble repertory. A six "movement" work, *Glassworks* was intended to introduce my music to a more general audience than had been familiar with it up to then.

Most of the movements are for instrumental ensemble. "Opening," the only one for solo piano, is vintage Glass. It

is constructed from triplets in the right hand and duplets in the left for its duration. Glass uses musical drones and lets his ideas overlap as he metamorphoses them through their hypnotic iterations.

#### IN BRIEF

**BORN:** November 10, 1668, Paris, France

**DIED:** September 11, 1733, Paris, France

#### **MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC**

**PERFORMANCE:** April 10, 2019, Simone Dinnerstein, piano

**DURATION:** 3 minutes

#### FRANÇOIS COUPERIN: LES BARRICADES MYSTÉRIEUSES

François Couperin, organist, harpsichordist, composer, and theorist, was the most important musician in France in the early 18th century. His treatise *L'art de toucher le clavecin* (*The Art of Harpsichord Playing*, Paris, 1716) is one of the finest essays on Baroque performance practice. He was the greatest in a long line of musicians named Couperin; in this respect, his family is a direct analog to the German Bach family.

Couperin joined the court of Louis XIV as organist in 1693. By the following year, he was teaching harpsichord to the Dauphin, grandson of Louis XIV, and the Dauphin's wife, the Duchess of Burgundy. He remained active at the French court until 1730, well into the reign of Louis XV.

Couperin's harpsichord music often lacks the rhythmic insistence one finds so often in Bach, allowing the listener to concentrate more on the nuances and expressive capabilities of the melodic lines. *Les barricades mystérieuses* does both: it reveals itself in a gentle motor rhythm, with a pleasing melody that consists of chains of suspensions. This means that a specific pitch – the melody line – becomes temporarily dissonant because it occurs in a strong rhythmic position, such as a downbeat. The pitch is sustained while the harmony shifts in another musical line. This piece, which was included in Couperin's *Sixième Ordre* of harpsichord pieces in 1717, uses a technique the French call *stile brisé* (broken style) that is borrowed from lute tablature. The notes of the chord are not sounded together but are rather arpeggiated.

And what of the title? Virtually all Couperin's French contemporaries adopted fanciful and descriptive titles for their instrumental compositions. Such titles may reflect the

character of the music – or be capricious and seemingly unrelated. Scholars disagree as to the meaning of *Les barricades mystérieuses*. The mysterious aspect is evident enough, but what are we to make of the barricades? One plausible hypothesis set forth by Frances Wilson is “the position of the player’s hands on the keyboard since they are mostly fixed or ‘barricaded’ in one position, in the tenor range of the keyboard, for the entirety of the piece.” It is also possible that Couperin wished to free our imaginations for their own exploration.

PĒTERIS VASKS:  
CASTILLO INTERIOR

IN BRIEF

**BORN:** April 16, 1946, Aizpute, Latvia

**FIRST PERFORMANCE:** Premiered in 2014, composed in remembrance of St. Teresa of Avila

**MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC**

**PERFORMANCE:** Tonight marks the first performance of this work on our series.

**DURATION:** 12 minutes

Like the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt, Latvia’s Pēteris Vasks is associated with music of powerful spiritual and expressive means. Trained initially as a violinist in Latvia’s capital, Riga, he switched to double bass for additional study at the Lithuanian State Conservatory in Vilnius. As early as 1961 he played professionally with several orchestras in Lithuania and Latvia. Returning permanently to Latvia in 1973, he focused on composition, studying with Valentīns Utkins at the Latvian State Conservatory in Riga. Since 1989, Vasks has served on the faculty of the Dārziņš Music School, also in Riga.

Vasks is the son of a Baptist minister. Because of the USSR’s repressive policies toward religion, he encountered considerable opposition from Kremlin cultural authorities in the 1970s and 1980s. Composing became a channel through which he could express his ideas and philosophy – and elude government control.

His early compositions were influenced by Witold Lutosławski, Krzysztof Penderecki, and other members of the Polish school. Beginning in the 1980s, he often embedded Latvian folk music in his scores, a technique that enhanced his reputation as a musical champion of Latvian independence. The events of 1991, when the Baltic Republics were asserting their independence from the Soviet Union, catalyzed several such works. Today, his best-known composition is probably the Violin Concerto *Distant Light* (1997), written for the Latvian violinist Gidon Kremer, whose advocacy has done a great deal to make Vasks's work known internationally.

*Castillo Interior* (2013) was originally for violin and cello. Vasks sought to illustrate through music the writing of St. Teresa of Ávila, a 16th-century Spanish Carmelite nun and mystic. In her 1577 text, *El Castillo Interior* or *Las moradas* (Dwellings of the Interior Castle), she described her inner life.

Mr. Pratt was the catalyst for the solo piano version. Vasks was one of six composers he asked to compose a piece inspired by four lines in T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*. Vasks chose to transcribe *Castillo Interior* for piano. Pratt has written:

[St. Teresa of Avila's] prose proves to be a formidable counterpoint to Eliot's poetry, as both challenge listeners to reflect on the dwellings of our interior lives and how we connect across the expanse of humanity (and perhaps beyond) and serve as a great expression of an aspirational quality of life.

Vasks's music is reminiscent of chant. *Castillo Interior* has long lines and little rhythmic variety. Its relatively static harmony places emphasis on momentary dissonances and shifts in texture. Overall, the serenity of its conception encourages a contemplative listening experience.

FRED HERSCH:  
NOCTURNE FOR LEFT  
HAND ALONE

IN BRIEF

**BORN:** October 21, 1955, Cincinnati, Ohio

**DEDICATION:** This work was written for Hersch's longtime piano teacher, Sophia Rosoff.

**MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC**

**PERFORMANCE:** Tonight marks the first performance of this work on our series.

**DURATION:** 6 minutes

Fred Hersch is a jazz pianist, author, educator, and composer whose recordings have been nominated for 17 Grammy Awards. Since 1997, the Fred Hersch Trio has performed as a headliner at New York City's legendary Village Vanguard. In 2019, his trio was named the #1 Jazz Group of the Year in the *Downbeat* critics' poll. He has recorded more than sixty albums, including twelve as a solo pianist.

As a composer, Hersch was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2003, and he has been a resident composer at the MacDowell Colony nine times. His memoir, *Good Things Happen Slowly: A Life In and Out of Jazz* (2017) addressed not only his musical journey but also his struggles as the first openly gay, HIV-positive jazz musician. Hersch has taught at New England Conservatory, the Juilliard School, the New School, Rutgers University, and the Manhattan School of Music, and is widely sought after to conduct master classes.

His *Nocturne for Left Hand Alone* is the first of Hersch's *Three Character Studies* (2004), which were also his first fully notated piano pieces. He has written:

They are studies in that each piece emphasizes a technical or pianistic element; they are "character" studies because each one is inspired by someone I know. The "Nocturne for Left Hand Alone" is for my longtime piano teacher, Sophia Rosoff; she has a special fondness for Rachmaninoff and Scriabin.



His Nocturne is an affectionate salute not only to his former teacher but also to the solo left hand piano pieces by each of the two Russian composers he cites. The musical language is more influenced by their post-romantic harmonies than by jazz. Filtered through Hersch's 21st-century lens, the piece becomes both nostalgic and entirely original. Its textural complexity will have you watching carefully to confirm that such music can be produced solely by one hand.

## IN BRIEF

**BORN:** April 1, 1873, Staraya Russa, Russia

**DIED:** March 28, 1943, Beverly Hills, California

**FIRST PERFORMANCE:** October 2, 1903, Moscow. Sergei Rachmaninoff, piano.

### **MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC**

**PERFORMANCE:** Tonight marks the first performance of this work on our series.

**DURATION:** 5 minutes

SERGEI  
RACHMANINOFF:  
PRELUDE IN D MAJOR,  
OP. 23, NO. 4

Like major composer/pianists before him, notably Mozart and Chopin, Rachmaninoff composed many of his greatest works for solo piano, including some miniatures that fit into no standard category. The Preludes are an interesting case because they date from three distinct periods in his life, yet the total of 24 comprise one in each of the major and minor keys, emulating Chopin's model. Rachmaninoff's best-known prelude is the stormy C-sharp minor work that so many student pianists thunder through. It is the second movement of Rachmaninoff's *Morceaux de fantaisie*, Op. 3, and is otherwise unrelated to the two subsequent sets of preludes. The ten preludes of Op. 23 date from 1901 to 1903; the second set, Op. 32, followed in the summer of 1910 after his return from a concert tour to the United States. In general, Rachmaninoff's *Préludes* are longer than Chopin's: more elaborate and, with a couple of exceptions in the Chopin set, more complex. In his own concerts, Rachmaninoff did not play them in complete sets but tended to select a small group drawing from Op. 23 and Op. 32.

Mr. Pratt has chosen the D major prelude from Opus 23, which opens with a left hand arpeggiated figure that

establishes the mood of a nocturne. The right hand introduces the melody in the third measure. Essentially this prelude is a theme with three variations. With each restatement of the theme, Rachmaninoff introduces more complexity to the texture, culminating in a passionate climax in the second variation. The third variation functions as a coda. Bell-like high notes in the right hand echo the theme, as the Prelude comes to a peaceful, tender close.

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN:  
NOCTURNE IN B  
MAJOR, OP. 62, NO. 1

IN BRIEF

**BORN:** March 1, 1810, Zelazowa Wola, Poland

**DIED:** October 17, 1849, Paris, France

**MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC**

**PERFORMANCE:** March 1, 1989, William Wolfram, piano

**DURATION:** 7 minutes

Nocturnes and mazurkas, two genres associated closely with Chopin, typify the sources of his music: song and dance. Most of his nocturnes and mazurkas share a more introspective character than the other, more “public” genres – waltz, etude, and polonaise. Chopin’s genius allowed him to expand his harmonic and expressive vocabulary regardless of the vessel containing his ideas.

The term “nocturne” shares the same root as the 18th-century *notturmo*, a cousin of the serenade and divertimento that denoted multi-movement instrumental entertainment music for performance at evening events. In the 19th century, nocturnes evolved into romantic character pieces for piano. The Irish composer John Field (1782-1837) composed the earliest known piano nocturnes, but in Chopin’s hands, this variety of miniature flourished more richly.

Chopin’s nocturnes favor a *cantabile* theme over an elegant, broken chord accompaniment, rarely in regular arpeggios. He develops his melodies through chromaticism and ornamentation, as opposed to a Beethovenian motivic approach. Mini cadenzas provide a springboard for flights

of fancy: coloratura outbursts that captivate the ear and the soul, never exceeding the boundaries of good taste. The most ambitious of his nocturnes seethe with virtuosic passion in their middle sections. Even the shorter, simpler ones make every note count with the eloquence of poetry.

The late B major Nocturne shows Chopin in a ruminative mood. His melodic lines are flexible, often veering off to unexpected keys. The overall form is ternary (A-B-A), but he treats the form with the same flexibility as his melodies. The chromaticism is especially rich in the middle section, and the reprise of the A-section, which delivers the melody in trills, is spellbinding.

#### IN BRIEF

**BORN:** May 7, 1840, Votkinsk, Russia

**DIED:** November 6, 1893, St. Petersburg, Russia

**FIRST PERFORMANCE:** March 7, 1892, St. Petersburg

#### **MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC**

**PERFORMANCE:** Tonight marks the first performance of this work on our series.

**DURATION:** 4 minutes

PYOTR ILYICH  
TCHAIKOVSKY:  
INTERMEZZO FROM  
THE NUTCRACKER  
SUITE

*The Nutcracker* is a Christmas season staple, in addition to being one of Tchaikovsky's most popular scores. Composed in 1891 and 1892, it was Tchaikovsky's final ballet, conceived to capitalize on the enormous success of *Sleeping Beauty* in 1890. For his scenario, he drew on E.T.A. Hoffmann's 1816 story *Nußknacker und Mausekönig* (The Nutcracker and the Mouse King), which he read in Russian translation.

The ballet's Intermezzo is subtitled "Journey Through the Snow." It occurs at the end of Act I when the Nutcracker Prince invites Clara to accompany him through the enchanted forest to the domain of the Snow King and Queen. The Snow Queen and her dancing snowflakes welcome the pair to their magical kingdom.

The Russian composer Sergei Taneyev reduced the orchestral score of *The Nutcracker* for solo piano; however, that version was so technically demanding that Tchaikovsky decided

to make his own, somewhat simpler, piano version. The melody is in the middle, with swirling arpeggios in the right hand, and the left hand anchoring the harmony in octaves. As it builds through a crescendo to its climax, the texture becomes more chordal and grandiose, with rapidly repeated notes and giant chords. It is a splendid showpiece.

FRANZ LISZT: SONATA  
IN B MINOR, S.178

IN BRIEF

**BORN:** October 22, 1811, Raiding, Austria

**DIED:** July 31, 1886, Bayreuth, Germany

**FIRST PERFORMANCE:** January 22, 1857, Berlin, Hans von Bülow, piano

**MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC**

**PERFORMANCE:** February 20, 2024, Beatrice Rana, piano

**DURATION:** 30 minutes

The 19th century's Brahms/Wagner divide hinged on the merits of absolute music and program music. Brahms was a champion of absolute music: the art form for its own sake, abstract works cast in the traditional forms and genres of sonata, symphony, variations. Wagner, on the other hand, believed that Beethoven's Ninth Symphony had sounded the death knell of the symphony. In his view, the future of music lay in multi-sensory artistic packages that embraced other arts such as literature. The ultimate artistic creation was opera: a *Gesamtkunstwerk* (complete artwork) that combined music and libretto along with the visual arts of costume, lighting, and set design.

Franz Liszt was firmly in the Wagnerian camp. Though Liszt did not compose operas, most of his original works are somehow linked to an extramusical source. Indeed, Liszt effectively invented the symphonic poem, and he was the first to employ that term (in 1854, for a performance of the orchestral work *Tasso*). His piano music abounds in programmatic references, ranging from concert fantasies based on operatic themes to travelogues memorializing his years abroad (*Années de pèlerinage*).

Thus the Sonata in B Minor seems something of an aberration. Why would Liszt tackle a sonata, the most revered and intellectual of absolute music? The answer is complex and has close connections to another significant contribution that Liszt made to music: the concept of thematic transformation.

Among Liszt's hundreds of piano works there are only two sonatas: the *Dante* Sonata, a programmatic work related to both Dante's *Inferno* and a poem about Dante by the French author Victor Hugo, and the Sonata in B minor. Both works date from the early 1850s and employ sonata principles within the framework of a large, one-movement form. Thereafter the similarities diminish. Whereas the *Dante* Sonata is part of the *Années de pèlerinage*, the B minor Sonata stands independently. *Dante* has extramusical associations, the B minor Sonata is a brilliant experiment in form.

Liszt took two icons of absolute music as his points of departure: Beethoven and Schubert. He had studied the bold experiments in form in Beethoven's late piano sonatas, and particularly admired the mighty sectional finale to the Ninth Symphony. Among Schubert's piano works, his principal model was the *Wanderer-Fantasia*, which Liszt played frequently in recital and also arranged for piano and orchestra.

The melodic material in Liszt's Sonata in B Minor is amorphous. He waits a while before he gives us something to hold onto, yet the quiet opening measures contain a motive that will recur in various guises throughout the sonata. This motive, a descending scale in the lower register, resembles Wagner's *Leitmotif* for Wotan's sword in the *Ring* cycle. Liszt employs it as a unifying device.

Then comes the first explosion: a sharp, angular burst in double octaves, answered by a sinister rumble in the bass. The repeated notes, the fits and starts, the stark contrasts have their roots in both Beethoven's *Appassionata* Sonata and his late C minor Sonata, Op.111. In the first fifteen measures, Liszt has put nearly all his thematic cards on the table – but he has barely begun to shuffle the deck.

He takes us on a spectacular journey of big chords and dazzling passage work, crossed hands, and fearsome cascades

of double octaves. We hardly know what key we are in through the tumult. This ‘music of gesture’ and ‘music of mood’ has ample precedent in the romantic era, and Liszt was a master of romantic keyboard technique. The *bravura* segment ushers in the next big theme, marked *Grandioso*, and initially stated in D major. Remarkably, for a work that is so tonally unstable at its start, Liszt has landed us in the relative major, precisely where we would expect to be at this point in a conventional sonata.

The *Grandioso* music is the last major new idea that Liszt introduces. Now begins the thematic transformation – a process of extended development through which the newly evolved themes become the form itself. Liszt adheres to the structural ideas he set forth and explored in his symphonic poems, many of which date from the same period of the early 1850s. His transformation maintains the overall shape of each melodic unit and, in many cases, the actual pitches, but he alters the harmony, mood, rhythm, and character as well as tempo. The pianist and writer Charles Rosen has written:

Even more profound is the tendency of all the themes of the sonata to turn into one another. This fluidity of thematic identity is perhaps the greatest sign of Liszt’s mastery. . . Three different themes . . . [spring] clearly from a common source: one motif slips easily into the others.

Just as Liszt blurs the contours and distinctiveness of his melodic material, so does he erase the boundaries between sections of music. The Sonata contains no distinct movements, and musicians have long debated whether it consists of three or four principal sections. Passages of *recitativo*, mini-cadenzas, and the momentary silence of a *fermata*, or a pause, all serve as transitions. The music includes intimate passages that seem like eavesdropping on a confessional, such as the central *Andante sostenuto* that is sometimes cited as the sonata’s “slow movement.” Some listeners perceive the brilliant *fugato* – whose subject combines two of the motives introduced on the sonata’s

first page – as a scherzo. The seamless narrative flow argues otherwise, however, transporting us back to more double octaves, a re-acquaintance with the descending scale motive, and two more transcendent statements of the *grandioso* theme.

Liszt's original conclusion was big, bold, and loud, marked triple *forte*. He reconsidered that ending, realizing that the heroism and grandiosity had already occurred. The Sonata ends with a final statement of the three ideas on its opening page, now in radiant B major. The first is *piano, sotto voce* (quiet, subdued, 'under' the voice), gradually dissipating to triple *piano*.

If one listens to surface detail, the B minor Sonata sounds free, improvisatory, and episodic. Liszt's use of Phrygian mode and Central European Gypsy scales enriches the harmonic palette. His larger scheme is dazzling in its complexity and discipline. The complexity arises from the sophistication of Liszt's thematic metamorphosis. The discipline is inherent in the composer's simultaneous attention to detail and to the architecture of the large structure.

With the Sonata in B minor, Liszt was trying to move the venerable, prestigious sonata form forward to the next era, to give this traditional vessel a future in what he regarded as the correct path for music. When the Sonata was published in 1854, admirers heralded it as a masterpiece. Detractors scorned it as an ill-conceived, overwrought exercise in virtuosity. Posterity's judgment has been generous. Kenneth Hamilton has written that, if Liszt had composed nothing else, the Sonata alone "would still be enough to rank him as one of the greatest Romantic composers." By any measure, the Sonata is incomparably original and one of musical romanticism's defining leaps forward.

*Program notes by Laurie Shulman ©2024*

# COLORADO GIVES DAY IS DECEMBER 10!

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# UPCOMING CONCERTS

## TONY SIQI YUN, PIANO

SUN, JAN 5, 2025 | 4:00 PM | GATES CONCERT HALL

Photo: Dario Acosta



Canadian pianist Tony Siqui Yun, a much sought-after soloist and recitalist, was the Gold Medalist at the 2019 First China International Music Competition. He was awarded the Rheingau Music Festival's 2023 Lotto-Förderpreis. This will be Yun's FCM debut performance. His program includes works by Beethoven, Brahms, Liszt, and Schumann.

"Tony is a true poet of the keyboard. Expressive, and with his own distinct voice, yet elegant and poised. — *Pianist Magazine*

*Tickets are \$50 each; \$15 for patrons under 30; and \$5 for students (with ID)*

## DANISH QUARTET

THU, FEB 6, 2025 | 7:30 PM | GATES CONCERT HALL

Photo: Caroline Bittencourt



One of the world's most renowned string quartets, performing to sold-out concert halls around the world, the Danish String Quartet returns for a third time to the Chamber Series. *Musical America's* 2020 Ensemble of the Year, the quartet will perform works by Mozart and Shostakovich as well as folk music from around the world.

*Tickets are \$65 each; \$15 for patrons under 30; and \$5 for students (with ID)*

## SAVE THE DATE!

### DINNER WITH THE DANISH

WED, FEB 5, 2025 | 6:00 & 8:15 PM

NOCTURNE JAZZ CLUB | 1330 27TH STREET, DENVER

The Danish String Quartet takes to the Nocturne stage for two exciting performances – enjoy dinner during the 6:00 pm performance, or dessert and champagne during the 8:15 pm performance. Whether the Quartet is performing Beethoven or their trademark Nordic folk songs, they are known for their powerful performances, intense musicality, and “rock star” vibe!

*Tickets on sale soon at [www.friendsofchambermusic.com](http://www.friendsofchambermusic.com)*

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# UPCOMING CONCERTS

## CHAMBER SERIES

**Danish String Quartet**

Thu, Feb 6, 2025 | 7:30 pm

**Benjamin Beilman, violin**

**Steven Osborne, piano**

Thu, Mar 6, 2025 | 7:30 pm

**Quartetto di Cremona**

**Basil Vendryes, viola**

Wed, Apr 9, 2025 | 7:30 pm

**Miró Quartet**

**Steven Banks, saxophone**

Wed, May 14, 2025 | 7:30 pm

## SUNDAY SERIES

**Tony Siqi Yun, piano**

Sun, Jan 5, 2025 | 4:00 pm

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

**MUSIC IN THE GALLERIES**

Sun, Dec 8, 2024 | 12:00 & 1:00 pm

(identical concerts)

Gwenyth Aggeler, classical guitar

Clyfford Still Museum

1250 Bannock Street, Denver

**Danish Quartet at Nocturne Jazz**

Wed, Feb 5, 2025 | 6:00 & 8:15 pm

1330 27th Street, Denver

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