PIANO
CLEVELAND

PRESENTS



SEMI-FINAL CHAMBER ROUND

Sponsored by Jeffrey and Norma Glazer

SESSION 2

Tuesday, July 28 | 7:30 PM

Mixon Hall
Cleveland Institute of Music

Program

RISING STAR DIVISION



Wilson Liu | 12
United States

Sonata for Four Hands in C Major, K. 521 — **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** *(1756–1791)*
I. Allegro

SENIOR DIVISION



Yurim Kim | 17
South Korea

Piano Trio No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 49 — **Felix Mendelssohn** *(1809–1847)*
I. Molto allegro agitato



Chenxu Han | 17
China

Piano Trio No. 1 in B Major, Op. 8 — **Johannes Brahms** *(1833–1897)*
I. Allegro con brio – Tranquillo – In tempo ma sempre sostenuto



Deva Mira Sperandio | 18
Spain

Piano Trio No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 49 — **Felix Mendelssohn** *(1809–1847)*
I. Molto allegro agitato

Intermission

The Cleveland International Piano Competition for Young Artists Semi-Final Chamber Round is sponsored by Jeffrey and Norma Glazer.

Program

SENIOR DIVISION



Guillermo Hernández Barrocal | 18
Spain

Piano Trio No. 1 in B Major, Op. 8 — **Johannes Brahms** *(1833–1897)*
I. Allegro con brio – Tranquillo – In tempo ma sempre sostenuto



Yu Qin Lu | 17
China

Piano Trio No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 49 — **Felix Mendelssohn** *(1809–1847)*
I. Molto allegro agitato

Brief Pause

Announcement of **Junior and Senior Division Finalists**

Announcement of **Rising Star Division Winner**



Rising Star Division performances feature **Khanh Nhi Luong**, piano.

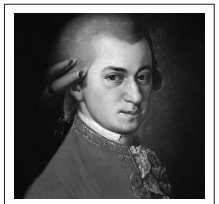




Senior Division performances feature **Jinjoo Cho** (violin), *left,* and **Max Geissler** (cello).

ENCORE Chamber Music Institute is a non-profit classical music organization and summer training academy serving the greater Cleveland community. Founded in 2015 by world-renowned, Cleveland-raised violinist **Jinjoo Cho,** the institute focuses on high-level mentorship, artistic collaboration, and community performance.

Program Notes | By Marco Ladd, Ph.D.



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

(1756-1791)

Sonata for Piano, Four Hands in C Major, K. 521

I. Allegro

One of the most important musicians of the Classical period and its foremost child prodigy, **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** was born in Salzburg, in what is now Austria, to a highly musical family. His father, Leopold, was a violinist; once he saw the musical gifts with which his son and his older daughter Marianne ("Nannerl") were endowed, he set off on a long tour of the courts and cities of Europe, proudly showing off his children's musical abilities on the violin and piano to the astonished nobility. In particular, the young Wolfgang—no older than five when he began touring, and just eight when he wrote his first symphony—caused a sensation. Mozart thus grew up in a glare of publicity, and it is perhaps no coincidence that after a brief engagement at the court of the archbishop of Salzburg, he was one of the first composers to make a living as an independent musician. That is, rather than entering the service of a single powerful nobleman (as his elder colleague Joseph Haydn would do for most of his career), Mozart eventually moved to Vienna, and supported himself by giving public concerts—a new fashion in the late 1700s—teaching, selling works to publishers, and seeking the ad hoc support of benevolent patrons. Mozart's compositions are emblematic of the mature Classical style: they are characterized by an easy grace that blended the charm and sophistication of the galant style, which was in full force when he was born, with a new intellectual rigor and complexity that came with his study of music from the earlier Baroque period—and especially the works of Handel and J. S. Bach.

Mozart took pupils throughout his independent professional career, a few of which (such as Johann Nepomuk Hummel, who studied with Mozart as a boy) went on to become major figures of a pan-European, "post-Classical" style. Many of Mozart's pupils, however, were young Viennese women for whom a professional musical career was never on the cards; playing the piano was for them an accomplishment and marker of social elevation rather than a vocation, even if some were undoubtedly very gifted musicians. The Sonata for Piano, four hands in C major, K. 521 emerges from a rich realm of domestic music-making, which was itself a crucial professional domain for musicians like Mozart, but one with different social functions to public spaces like the opera house or the concert hall. In fact, piano duets were a quintessentially domestic genre, insofar as they required two performers to share one instrument—by their very nature, they cultivated an intimacy inappropriate for public performance. The sonata was written in May 1787, likely with Mozart's pupil Franziska von Jaquin in mind; she was the sister of his friend Gottfried von Jaquin, to whom he sent the completed work with the admonition that the work was "somewhat difficult" and directing Fransiska to begin learning it immediately. When the work was published later that same year, however, it was dedicated to Nanette and Babette Natorp, the daughters of a Viennese businessman also acquainted with Jaquin. Dedications, like piano duets, helped to grease the wheels of social interaction and obligation in Viennese society; the Natorp sisters—we can imagine—may themselves have played the Sonata together.

K. 521, as indicated by Mozart's absent-minded indication of "first piano" and "second piano" his autograph score, was probably first conceived for two pianos rather than piano, four hands. In compressing the music into the four-hand format, he simplified the writing a degree, but it is still possible to hear an "orchestral" marshalling of register and texture in the way the pianists' hands are disposed on the keyboard; certainly, it requires a deft touch to bring off convincingly. The opening Allegro, in **sonata form**, begins with a cheerful, slightly pompous theme played by both players in unison. From here, the two players bat musical phrases between them over chugging accompaniment patterns. After a transitional passage and a change of key, a new theme takes over; it is like a smoothed out, more elegant version of the opening theme, with conversational interjections supplied by the other player. Mozart prolongs this section by continually delaying a final cadence, in a manner similar to his piano concertos; when the conclusion finally comes, marked by a joyful trill (shake) in the first player's part, it is all the more gratifying. In the middle of the movement Mozart toys with the ideas he has introduced, through sequenced chord progressions that briefly explore the emotionally charged world of minor keys, before preparing the way for the reintroduction of the main theme. In the final section, the ideas from the first half of the movement are reprised in the same order, though modified so that the music remains in the home key; as before, the concerto-like cadential passage brings the movement as a whole to a satisfying conclusion.

Program Notes



Felix Mendelssohn

(1809–1847)

Piano Trio No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 49

I. Molto allegro agitato

The composer, pianist, organist and conductor **Felix Mendelssohn** was a Mozartian child prodigy whose graceful, emotional works came to encapsulate the early Romantic movement in Western music. Born to a prominent Jewish family that had converted to Protestantism, Mendelssohn was brought up in Berlin in a refined intellectual milieu: his grandfather was the esteemed philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, while his mother's salon attracted the cream of artistic and scholarly society. Both Felix and his elder sister Fanny were exceptionally gifted musicians, receiving advanced training in piano and composition from an early age; the siblings remained close confidants throughout their lives, although Fanny, on account of her sex and above all her class, was never allowed to consider a professional career in music. Felix, on the other hand, performed publicly from an early age and composed profusely; among his many achievements, he helped re-popularize the music of Johann Sebastian Bach by organizing—aged just twenty—a landmark centenary performance of the *St. Matthew Passion* in 1829. From then on, Mendelssohn enjoyed a performing, composing and conducting career that made him, during his lifetime at least, the toast of musical society across Europe. After his death, his reputation suffered, partly due to a backlash against his classicizing restraint (which later observers dismissed as kitsch); partly because of rising anti-Semitism in German-speaking lands that eventually, under National Socialism, saw his music banned outright. Yet his most popular works, from the Violin Concerto to his incidental music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, never lost their hold on audiences; they remain cornerstones of the repertoire today.

Mendelssohn wrote chamber music throughout his career, but he only approached the piano trio form twice. The first of his Trios, Op. 49 in D minor, was written in 1839, while Mendelssohn was working in Leipzig as the director of the Gewandhaus orchestra. Featuring the composer's characteristic blend of lyrical melodic writing, rigorous formal development along Classical lines, and a well-developed sense of counterpoint derived from his immersion in the music of Bach, the Trio was immediately popular with both audiences and critics. Notable among the work's proponents were the composer Robert Schumann, who dubbed Mendelssohn "the Mozart of the nineteenth century," and Schumann's wife, the eminent pianist Clara Schumann, who kept both of Mendelssohn's piano trios in her repertoire. Felix's beloved sister Fanny also played the work, most notably in 1841 as part of one of her very few appearances in a public concert.

Op. 49 begins with a lyrical, lilting tune in the cello, soon taken up by the violin; the pulsing piano accompaniment recalls the composer's *Lieder ohne Worte* (Songs without Words) for amateur pianists. But the piano part soon begins to assert its fiendish difficulty, while a thundering re-statement of the lilting theme reveals its steely inner core. As was typical in chamber music of the era, the movement is in **sonata form,** a flexible formal principle based on the strategic opposition of contrasting musical materials and their subsequent repetition. According to the first part of this scheme (the exposition), the lilting theme initiates a transition to a second theme, which begins in a hopeful major key but soon finds itself fatally attracted to the minor mode: the frenzied runs in the piano part and **tremolando** (trembling) string writing testify to the emotional power of this minor-key climax. A middle section known as the **development** sees Mendelssohn recombine the themes, moods and textures from the exposition, ultimately preparing for a calm reprise of the opening material. In this third section (the **recapitulation**) the original ideas from the exposition are repeated, but altered subtly so that the music remains rooted in the home key. This includes the dramatic concluding passage from before, whose frenzied agitation is brought to an even higher key of desperation in the **coda**, a finger-busting challenge for the pianist that refuses to let up until the crushing final chords.

Program Notes



Johannes Brahms

(1833–1897)

Piano Trio No. 1 in B Major, Op. 8 (1889 version)

I. Allegro con brio – Tranquillo – In tempo ma sempre sostenuto

Throughout his life the German composer **Johannes Brahms** was acutely aware of his position in music history. A pianist and avid chamber musician who spent much of his professional life in Vienna, Brahms harked back in his music to the classicism of his illustrious Viennese predecessors: Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, and above all Ludwig van Beethoven, whose towering reputation struck fear into the hearts of many a nineteenth-century composer. That this Germanic lineage of composers stretching back to Bach lay at the heart of a rapidly emerging canon of Western classical music only strengthened the anxiety of influence that haunted Brahms and his peers. Like his friends the violinist Joseph Joachim, the pianist Clara Schumann, and the music critic Eduard Hanslick, Brahms advocated for an ideal of **absolute music**: that is, music whose meaning was supposedly intrinsic to its formal procedures, referring to nothing but itself. Not for him the symphonic poems of Franz Liszt or the music dramas of Richard Wagner; he wrote symphonies and string quartets, using forms and genres inherited from the past. Brahms's critics accused him of being old-fashioned, but this was a misunderstanding of the complex juxtaposition of past and present that animates his music.

No area of Brahms's output better captures this dialogue than his chamber music, a genre that bookended his career—quite literally in the case of the Piano Trio in B major, Op. 8. His first published chamber work, the Trio was written in early 1854, in the creative flourishing that followed the young Brahms's acquaintance with Robert and Clara Schumann. Three decades later, in 1889, the composer revised the work. No surface-level alteration, Brahms made significant cuts to the score—amounting to around 10 minutes of music—and rewrote large sections of the rest; only the Scherzo remained more or less unchanged. The revised Trio is an unusual hybrid, the work of an ambitious young composer and simultaneously that of a master craftsman. Even so, this 1889 version (the one played most often today) sits comfortably among the chamber masterpieces of Brahms's last decade—in its mood of troubled nobility, it recalls works like the Clarinet Quintet of 1891, with which it shares a home key of B.

Op. 8 is unusual in other ways, too. Most large-scale works introduce harmonic variety by changing keys, both within individual movements and between them. In Op. 8, however, all four movements are in B, whether major or minor. In music theory, the major and minor varieties of a given key—its **mode**—are very closely related, but markedly different in their effect; whereas the major mode typically has positive emotional associations (joy, peace, triumph), the minor mode has negative ones (sadness, dejection, defeat). Passing from one to the other is symbolically charged: think of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, for example, which begins in a restless C minor and ends gloriously in C major, marking a journey from darkness to light. Brahms's Trio, in contrast, begins in B major and ends in B minor; the polarity of light and shade is reversed. And because all the movements share a home key of B, there is no respite in the inner movements either.

The first movement, however, begins optimistically in B major with a broad, singing theme, first in the piano, then the cello, and finally the violin. But the joyous mood does not last. As was standard in chamber music of this time, the opening movement of Op. 8 is in **sonata form**, a powerful organizing principle that depends on the presentation of (typically) two contrasting musical ideas in different keys, in a first part known as the **exposition.** In a major-key movement the second theme is typically in another major key: positive to positive. But in Op. 8, the second theme, quiet and questioning where the opening theme was confident and relaxed, is in G-sharp minor, the **relative minor.** This choice of key is very unusual, and the symbolic trajectory—positive to negative—echoes through the rest of the Trio. For instance, the middle section of the movement (the **development**) culminates in a dramatic outburst that ends, once again, in G-sharp minor. In the **recapitulation**, the third and final section of the sonata form, all the themes from the exposition are repeated in order, but altered so as to remain in the home key; logically, because the all-important second-theme was in a minor key earlier on, now it re-appears in a shadowy B minor. Here, then, is the root of the Trio's unsettled flickering between the major and minor mode, even if the long coda at the end of the movement rounds things off in a hopeful B major.



JEAN-YVES THIBAUDET IN RECITAL

Thursday, July 30 | 7:30 PM

GARTNER AUDITORIUM
CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART
Presented by Dr. Michael Frank and Pat Snyder†

In a rare solo recital, renowned pianist and Cleveland piano competition laureate Jean-Yves Thibaudet returns to Cleveland to play Debussy's complete *Préludes*. A prolific recording artist, Thibaudet has appeared on more than 70 albums and six film scores. His extensive catalogue has received two GRAMMY nominations, Gramophone awards and two ECHO Awards. Don't miss your chance to see the legend up close and personal!

† Deceased

TICKETS AT **PIANOCLEVELAND.ORG**

Upcoming Events

Jean-Yves Thibaudet in Recital

Presented by Dr. Michael Frank and Pat Snyder†

Gartner Auditorium | Cleveland Museum of Art

Thursday, July 30 | 7:30 PM

Final Concerto Round

Presented by the Walter and Jean Kalberer Foundation

Kulas Hall | Cleveland Institute of Music

Friday, July 31 | 7:30 PM

Winners Community Concert

Cleveland Museum of Natural History

Saturday, August 1 | 12:00 PM

† Deceased



Final Masterclass Round

Presented by Dr. Michael Frank and Pat Snyder†

Kulas Hall | Cleveland Institute of Music

Watch a master at work! Contestants learn from piano legend and Cleveland competition laureate, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, in real time during the first-ever Final Masterclass Round.

Session 1

Wednesday, July 29 | 4:00 PM

Session 2

Wednesday, July 29 | 7:30 PM