

PIANO CONCERTS FEBRUARY 2017 - MAY 2017



Alessio Bax



Boris Giltburg

Steinway Society

The Bay Area

Music you love. Artists you'll cherish.



Beatrice Rana



Sofya Gulyak

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PIANO CONCERTS 2016–2017



Jon Nakamatsu

MOZART BRAHMS SCHUMANN CHOPIN

September 11, 2016, 7:00 p.m.

McAfee Performing Arts and Lecture Center, Saratoga



Fei-Fei Dong

GALUPPI SCHUMANN CHOPIN LEIBERMANN LISZT

October 15, 2016, 7:30 p.m.

Trianon Theatre, San Jose



Vyacheslav Gryaznov

BEETHOVEN DEBUSSY RAVEL PROKOFIEV RACHMANINOV

November 12, 2016, 7:30 p.m.

Trianon Theatre, San Jose



Klara Frei and Temirzhan Yerzhanov

SCHUBERT BRAHMS MENDELSSOHN SCHUMANN

January 21, 2017, 7:30 p.m.

Trianon Theatre, San Jose



Alessio Bax

MOZART SCHUBERT SCRIBAN RAVEL

February 5, 2017, 2:00 p.m.

Trianon Theatre, San Jose



Boris Giltburg

BEETHOVEN BRAHMS RACHMANINOV

March 11, 2017, 7:30 p.m.

Trianon Theatre, San Jose



Beatrice Rana

BACH DEBUSSY FRANCESCONI LISZT

April 8, 2017, 7:30 p.m.

Trianon Theatre, San Jose



Sofya Gulyak

CLEMENTI TCHAIKOVSKY SHOSTAKOVICH MEDTNER PROKOFIEV

May 7, 2017, 2:00 p.m.

Trianon Theatre, San Jose

Letter from the President



Dear Friends and Patrons,

Welcome to our exciting 2016 – 2017 Season. Thank you for supporting Steinway Society's internationally acclaimed pianists as they bring beloved masterworks to our community.

The season begins with local treasure **Jon Nakamatsu**, 1997 Van Cliburn Competition Gold Medalist, now celebrated worldwide. Our October concert presents the rising young Chinese pianist **Fei-Fei Dong** a finalist at the 2013 Van Cliburn competition.

Russian virtuoso **Vyacheslav Gryaznov**, winner of the Rubinstein and Rachmaninoff Competitions in Moscow joins us in November with a program that includes a premiere performance of his transcription of Prokofiev's "Sur la Borysthene." The celebrated piano duo **Frei and Yerzhanov** perform Romantic Period favorites in January, 2017. Exhilarating artist **Alessio Bax**, soloist with more than 100 orchestras since winning the Leeds International Piano Competition, will thrill in February. March presents the brilliant **Boris Giltburg**, who won First Prize at the 2013 Queen Elisabeth Competition (Brussels) and performs internationally with esteemed conductors. Italian pianist **Beatrice Rana**, Silver Medalist and Audience Favorite at the 2013 Van Cliburn Competition, lights up April. And, back in May by popular demand, the radiant Russian pianist **Sofya Gulyak**, the only woman awarded First Prize and Princess Mary Gold Medal at a Leeds International Piano Competition.

We are already very excited about our upcoming 2017-18 Season. With a lineup of spectacular artists and music that will whisk you away to other times and places, next year's programs promise to delight. We are also seeking to expand our Board of Directors, and would welcome your participation.

Sandra Wales

President, Board of Directors

Front cover photos: Alessio Bax, © Lisa-Marie Mazzucco, Boris Giltburg, © Sasha Gusov, Beatrice Rana, © Ellen Appel-Mike Morel, Sofya Gulyak, © Fedor Ermolayev.



Alessio Bax

Alessio Bax, a pianist of authority, elegance and intensity (as described respectively by the Daily Telegraph, the New Yorker and Gramophone), is praised for his lyrical performances and compelling, insightful interpretations. As First Prize winner at the

Leeds International Piano Competition, and the recipient of an Avery Fisher Career Grant and Lincoln Center's Martin E. Segal Award, Bax is a star on the rise.

He has appeared as soloist with more than 100 orchestras, including the London and Royal Philharmonic orchestras, Japan's NHK Symphony, Dallas Symphony with Jaap van Zweden, St. Petersburg Philharmonic with Yuri Temirkanov, and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra with Sir Simon Rattle. Bax recently added a Russian album and a lullaby collection (Lullabies For Mila is dedicated to his daughter, Mila) to a burgeoning discography that includes works by Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart, Rachmaninov and Stravinsky – all of which have been singled out for distinction by the most discerning critics. He was recently appointed Artistic Director of Italy's Incontri in Terra di Siena Festival for a three-year term starting in 2017.

Photo: Alessio Bax, © Lisa-Marie Mazzucco

Program

Mozart, *6 Variations on a Theme from the Clarinet Quintet KV 581, KV Anh. 137*

Schubert, *Sonata in A Minor, D 784*

Allegro giusto

Andante

Allegro vivace

Intermission

Scriabin, *Sonata No. 3, Op. 23*

Drammatico

Allegretto

Andante

Presto con fuoco

Ravel, *La Valse pour orchestre (poème chorégraphique pour orchestre)*

Program Notes

6 Variations on a Theme from the Clarinet Quintet KV 581, KV Anh. 137
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

In 1789, Mozart wrote his only completed clarinet quintet for his friend, clarinetist Anton Stadler. It remains one of the most well-known pieces featuring the instrument. The piano transcription is of the *Quintet's* final movement, which is in variation form. Filling in for both clarinet and string quartet, the piano must balance an ebullient melody with light *staccato* chords. The third variation, in the new key of A minor, is punctuated by the left hand accompaniment. The fourth variation returns to the main theme before the fifth slows to a lyrical *Adagio*. The sixth variation was the original *Quintet's* *coda* and ends with two quick final chords.

Sonata in A Minor, D 784 (Post. Published as Op. 143)

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Franz Schubert composed his *Sonata in A Minor* in 1823, but it was not published until 1839, 11 years after the composer's death. The publishers dedicated it to Felix Mendelssohn, who championed Schubert's works. This three-movement sonata has a tragic tone, with a bleak and heavy first movement opening melody. Additionally, many sections of the first movement end abruptly and move on without modulation or

announcement. The shifts between heavy, heroic, and calm, however, indicate that no one mood prevails throughout the piece. A quiet *Andante* barely dispels the atmosphere of despair before the chill winds of the final *Allegro vivo*, at the end of which swift chords and sweeping double octaves propel the sonata to its end.

Sonata No. 3, Op. 23

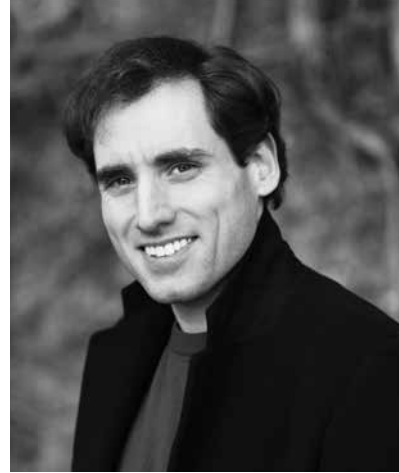
Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915)

Alexander Scriabin composed his *Piano Sonata No. 3* in 1897 and 1898, early in his career, while he was touring as a pianist and newlywed with his wife, Vera. Scriabin prescribed a program for this Romantic style piece, titling it “States of the Soul.” The first movement, *Drammatico*, opens in tumult and confusion, building a desire to break free. It finally reaches a tranquil mood that continues through the second movement before the third movement’s touches of sorrow. The *finale* emerges in hope, with an unusual and dramatic introduction, but ends just as the climax begins, when the audience least expects a conclusion. The ending seems truncated, and one is left feeling that the music should cycle back to the *Sonata’s* beginning and repeat itself.

La Valse pour orchestre (poème chorégraphique pour orchestre)

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Maurice Ravel’s *La Valse* (“The Waltz”) is a choreographic poem for orchestra that has enchanted its way onto many programs since its first performance in 1920. Ravel had planned a tribute to waltzing Vienna and Johann Strauss, but after the horrors of WWI he composed instead a terrifying tone poem, a bitter and ferocious fantasy. Ravel transcribed it for two pianos as well as piano solo. The innovative introduction gives no indication of a waltz — a low rumble starts the piece as excerpts of waltz melodies are barely heard. Suddenly, the main waltz theme bursts through, followed by waltzes that vary in style. A loud trill and return to the introduction brings the audience into the second half. Each of the melodies is repeated, but with tempo changes, modulations, and new intonations. Wide, sweeping movements of the pianist’s arms cast a glorious effect over the classic waltzes and lead to a *danse macabre* coda with a final measure, perhaps symbolically, not in waltz-time.



Boris Giltburg

Born in 1984 in Moscow, Boris Giltburg moved to Tel Aviv at an early age. Having won the Santander Competition in 2002 and taken second (and audience) prize at the Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition in 2011, he has

appeared with leading orchestras, such as the Israel Philharmonic, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Swedish Radio Symphony, and Danish Radio Symphony. He made his BBC Proms debut in 2010, and has toured regularly to South America and China. In 2013 he won first prize at the Queen Elisabeth Competition (Brussels), with subsequent concerts in Vienna, London, Tokyo, Brussels and Seattle. He has worked with esteemed conductors such as Neeme Järvi, Edo de Waart and Christoph von Dohnányi. For the 2015/16 Season, The Royal Scottish National Orchestra invited him for seven concerts in their Rachmaninov series.

Having initially appeared on the EMI Debut label, in 2012 Giltburg released an acclaimed CD of Prokofiev’s War Sonatas on Orchid Classics. In 2015, with the release of a Schumann recital disc, he began a long-term recording arrangement with Naxos Records.

Photo: Boris Giltburg. © Sasha Gusov

Program

Beethoven, *Sonata No.14 in C-sharp minor, Op.27, No.2*

'Quasi una fantasia'

Adagio sostenuto

Allegretto

Presto agitato

Brahms, *Phantasien Op. 116*

No. 1 Capriccio in D minor

No. 2 Intermezzo in A minor

No. 3 Capriccio in G minor

No. 4 Intermezzo in E major

No. 5 Intermezzo in E minor

No. 6 Intermezzo in E major

No. 7 Capriccio in D minor

Intermission

Rachmaninoff, *Thirteen Preludes Op. 32*

No. 1 in C major (Allegro vivace)

No. 2 in B flat minor (Allegretto)

No. 3 in E major (Allegro vivace)

No. 4 in E minor (Allegro con brio)

No. 5 in G major (Moderato)

No. 6 in F minor (Allegro
appassionato)

No. 7 in F major (Moderato)

No. 8 in A minor (Vivo)

No. 9 in A major (Allegro
moderato)

No. 10 in B minor (Lento)

No. 11 in B major (Allegretto)

No. 12 in G sharp minor (Allegro)

No. 13 in D flat major (Grave –
Allegro)

Program Notes

Sonata No.14 in C-sharp minor, Op.27, No.2 "Quasi una fantasia"

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Written in 1801, the first movement of Beethoven's *Sonata, Opus 27 No. 2* was very popular in his day, exasperating the composer, who remarked to Czerny, "They are always talking about the C# minor Sonata- surely I've written better things." Nearly 200 years later, it remains the most popular and downloaded piece of "classical" music. Beethoven's title, "*Sonata quasi una fantasia*" signals that *Sonata* does not follow formal Classical Period sonata form, resembling instead a *Fantasia*, a free-form piece. The *Sonata's* "official" unofficial title, "*Moonlight Sonata*," came about in 1836, after Beethoven's death. German music critic Ludwig Rellstab wrote that the sonata reminded him of the reflected moonlight

off Lake Lucerne. Composed at the beginning of Beethoven's second stylistic period, this *Sonata* can be interpreted as his beginning to come to terms with his impending deafness. The *Adagio Sostenuto's* mourning and loss, with its modal changes and dissonances followed by the rage of the stormy third movement, may express his feelings about this affliction - writing extraordinary music yet being unable to hear it.

Phantasien, Op. 116

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

The works of Brahms' last decade have a decidedly autumnal quality, which is particularly evident in Opp. 116-119. Brahms seems to have exchanged the expansiveness and power of his earlier piano works, e.g., the great *Handel Variations*, early rhapsodies, and the piano sonatas, for a subtle, introspective poetry. A combination of three factors makes these works among the finest music written for piano: 1. Their introspection and concentrated, distilled poetic statements, especially relevant considering the loneliness and detachment Brahms struggled with in his last years. 2. The attention to detail, as in the refined counterpoint, which is to some extent is hidden beneath a lyrical surface. 3. Their pianism. Brahms is no longer interested in pushing boundaries, but instead explores the delicate inward-facing side of the piano's expressive potential.

Thirteen Preludes Op. 32

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873- 1943)

Rachmaninoff completed the *Thirteen Preludes, Op. 32* in 1910. They are representative of his later style, more subtle and harmonically advanced. They are also more complex and original in design than his *Preludes Op. 23*, and complete a full set of 24 preludes in all major and minor keys. The set opens with the robust *Prelude in C major*, full of flashy brilliance. The 10th *Prelude* is one of great introspection and searing spirit of self-revelation, The 12th *Prelude* is one of Rachmaninoff's most lyrical. A haunting cello-like theme floats over a shimmering background. After a center section, full of rubato and passionate outburst, the shimmering returns and the *Prelude* ends with utmost ease on two single notes. The last of the *Preludes* is a solemn piece imbued with almost religious majesty, and recalls moments from earlier *Preludes*. The *Prelude's* last two pages, with the magnificent theme ringing out like a cathedral bell tolling, end a *Prelude* set worthy not only to stand beside that of Chopin, but also to take an important place in the history of piano music.



Beatrice Rana

Born to a family of musicians in 1993, Beatrice Rana made her debut at age nine, performing Bach's Concerto in F minor. In June 2013, she won Silver (2nd Prize) and the Audience Award at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, having already attracted

international attention in 2011 when she won 1st Prize and all special prizes at the Montreal International Competition.

Ms. Rana is invited to concert series and festivals throughout the world, including Zurich's Tonhalle, Vienna's Musikverein, Paris' Theatre des Champs Elysées, London's Wigmore Hall, Washington's Kennedy Center, the Verbier Festival and Klavier Festival Ruhr. She has played or is due to play with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Accademia di Santa Cecilia, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Dresdner Philharmonie, with conductors like Zubin Mehta, Trevor Pinnock and Leonard Slatkin.

Harmonia Mundi released an acclaimed live CD of her Cliburn performances, prompting Gramophone magazine to proclaim that she "possesses . . . more than a touch of genius." Her 2015 album for Warner Classics featured Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 2 and Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1.

Photo: Beatrice Rana. © Marie Staggat

Program

Bach, *Partita No. 2 in C minor, BMV 826*

Sinfonia
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Rondeaux
Capriccio

Debussy, *Pour le Piano, L. 95*

Prélude
Sarabande
Toccata

Intermission

Francesconi, *Commissioned Work*

Liszt, *Sonata in B-minor, S. 178*

Program Notes

Partita No. 2 in C minor, BMV 826

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

This *Partita* is the second of six in the last set of *Suites* Bach wrote for the keyboard and published collectively in 1731. Perhaps their finality is the reason they are so technically challenging. The opening *Sinfonia* makes a grand entrance into a song-like melody. Of course, a fugue soon follows, but being in only two-voices, it is hard to notice immediately. The following *Allemande*, *Courante*, *Sarabande*, and *Rondeaux* trade off between melancholic and lively, lyrical and energetic. The last dance is a *Capriccio* instead of a *Gigue*, as in the volume's other five *Suites*. Its freer form provides an intense and directed end.

Pour le Piano, L. 95

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Completed in 1901, just after the turn of the century, Debussy's *Pour le Piano* is a suite of three pieces, each with its own dedication and style. Although the impressionistic qualities of the composer's later works is absent, the pieces require virtuosic talent to master. The *Prelude* enters

with full speed and volume and barrels towards exotic rhythms and harmonies. The peaceful *Sarabande* provides a welcome rest between the *Prelude* and the intense *Toccata*, offering a moment to think and reflect. The *Toccata* is perhaps the most difficult of the three pieces, with fast figures rippling throughout in an undercurrent while a variety of melodies move above.

Commissioned Work

Luca Francesconi (b. 1956)

Luca Francesconi is an Italian composer born in Milan. He studied at the Milan Conservatory and participated in all aspects of music, including playing in jazz and rock bands and studying abroad at Boston's Berklee College of Music. Since then, Francesconi has composed works for full orchestra, small ensembles, and musical theater and has served as an artistic director, teacher, and collaborator. Here, the pianist will perform one of his commissioned works.

Sonata in B minor, S. 178

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

The lack of separation between movements in Liszt's *Sonata in B minor* gave rise to much controversy and criticism in 1853, when it was published. Today, the *Sonata* is the source of analysis and debate, not just for its interesting harmonies or techniques, but also for its possible symbols and meaning, with theories ranging from descriptions of the divine and diabolical to portraits of Faust, Gretchen and Mephistopheles from the Faust legend. Though in one movement, the *Sonata* follows sonata form, prompting biographer Alan Walker to call it a "sonata within a sonata." Three of the five main themes are presented early in the first movement, providing a variety of material for the pianist, from descending scales to *staccato* octaves to smooth melodies. Even the *finale* provided controversy for Liszt, who had originally written a loud ending and crossed it out in favor of a quiet descent into silence. Throughout this thirty-minute composition, demanding passages continually test the pianist's abilities.



Sofya Gulyak

Invited to return because of her radiant 2015 Steinway Society recital, Sofya Gulyak, at the 16th Leeds International Piano Competition (2009), became, and remains, the only woman awarded the First Prize and the Princess Mary Gold Medal. Her other

prizes include First Prize of the William Kapell International, Maj Lind Helsinki International, and Tivoli (Copenhagen) competitions. She has since appeared to great acclaim all over the world.

A native of Kazan (Russia), she graduated with the highest distinction from École Normale de Musique de Paris and studied at the Royal College of Music.

She has appeared with countless renowned orchestras, including the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Halle Orchestra, Leipzig Philharmonic, and Orchestre National de France, and with renowned conductors including Vladimir Ashkenazy. Her festival appearances include Klavier Ruhr Festival, International Strasbourg Festival, Liszt Festival at Villa d'Este, and Festival Chopin in Paris, and radio and TV broadcasts in 13 countries.

She has taught master classes in China, Italy, Australia, New Zealand, Philippines and Hong Kong. She is a professor at London's Royal College of Music and records for Champs Hill Records.

SALON RECITAL

Ms. Gulyak will give a fundraising In-Home recital for Steinway Society on Saturday, May 6. To learn more or reserve tickets call 408 990-0872.

Photo: Sofya Gulyak, © Fedor Ermolayev.

Program

Clementi, *Sonata Op. 33 No. 3*

Allegro con spirito
Adagio e cantabile, con espressione
Presto

Tchaikovsky (trans. M. Pletnev), *Nutcracker Suite*

1. March
2. Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy
3. Tarantella
4. Intermezzo
5. Russian Dance (Trepak)
6. Chinese Dance
7. Andante maestoso

Shostakovich, *Prelude and Fugue in D-flat Major, Op. 87 No. 15*

Intermission

Medtner, *Four Fairy Tales, Op. 26*

Prokofiev, *Piano Sonata No. 6 in A Major, Op. 82*

Allegro moderato
Allegretto
Tempo di valzer lentissimo
Vivace

Program Notes

Sonata Op. 33 No. 3

Muzio Clementi (1752-1832)

As one of the first composers to create works specifically for the piano, Muzio Clementi is often regarded as the “Father of the Piano.” In order to take advantage of the instrument’s wide range of expression, Clementi is liberal with the technically difficult maneuvers such as jumps, runs and wide reaches. Clementi wrote more than 100 piano sonatas. *Sonata Op. 33 No. 3* exhibits clear melodies that give the audience an opportunity to hear the pianist’s expressive abilities.

Nutcracker Suite

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1853) (trans. M. Pletnev, b. 1957)

Just as Tchaikovsky extracted selections from his *Nutcracker* ballet to form the orchestral *Nutcracker Suite*, Mikhail Pletnev has arranged

some of the music into a virtuosic concert suite for solo piano. Pletnev founded and conducted the Russian National Orchestra and is a Moscow Conservatory classically trained pianist. In addition to *The Nutcracker*, he has transcribed *Sleeping Beauty*, Prokofiev’s *Cinderella*, and Shchedrin’s *Anna Karenina*. This piano suite is sure to delight because it contains some of the ballet’s most famous excerpts: the *March*, *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy*, *Russian Dance*, *Chinese Dance*, and *Pas de Deux*.

Prelude and Fugue in D-flat Major, Op. 87 No. 15

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

Shostakovich reportedly wrote his 24 prelude-fugue pairs for each key in the chromatic scale soon after hearing a performance of Bach’s *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. Each of the 24 was composed in a matter of days. *The Prelude and Fugue in D-flat Major* was written in December of 1950, which could explain why the opening melody sounds like holiday music. The style is a brusque waltz, very typical throughout Shostakovich’s works.

Four Fairy Tales, Op. 26

Nikolai Medtner (1879-1951)

A young contemporary of Rachmaninoff and Scriabin, Medtner composed only music that included the piano. Many of his solo piano works are referred to as *skazki*, meaning “tales,” as opposed to the specific class of fairy tales. These melodies are some of Medtner’s most original compositions. The *Op. 26 Tales* were written between 1910 and 1912. The first tale is one of wonderment and magic, with light, wispy touches ringing in the high registers. The second takes on a more lively tone with quick and dynamic jumps down the keys before the third moves into dotted rhythms. The final tale is a bit more mischievous at times, building on different figures and tonalities.

Piano Sonata No. 6 in A Major, Op. 82

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Written and first performed in 1940, Prokofiev’s *Piano Sonata No. 6* is the first of his *Three War Sonatas*, composed during World War II. The first movement, *Allegro moderato*, is filled with dissonance and unstable tonalities, and even the sonata form cannot keep everything in order. The main theme contains contrasting elements using A major and minor thirds, which is meant to add to the confusion of the piece. The *Allegretto* jumps around more and features *staccato* chords that allude to marching. The third movement provides some respite with a slow and romantic waltz before the fourth movement, in which the dissonant opening theme reappears and chaos remains.

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- Given free Steinway Society concert tickets to teachers, students and families from schools in financially challenged districts
- Produced Young Artist Salon Concerts and Master Classes in private homes
- Continued to grow! Community members attending Steinway Society season concerts, master classes and in-school educational concerts have grown from 3,100+ in the 2014-2015 season, to 4,500+ in 2015-2016.

Steinway Society is now partnering with Starting Arts, a non-profit arts education organization that provides hands-on arts education by professional artists in over 100 schools, with more than 30,000 students.

We invite you to help Steinway Society and Starting Arts sustain and grow these crucial educational activities. Please be as generous as you can.



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