

**BELLEVUE  
SYMPHONY**

**DIGITAL  
PROGRAM**

# **OUR HIGHLY ANTICIPATED YOUNG ARTIST CONCERT...**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 2 AT 3 pm**

Meydenbauer Theater

11100 NE 6th St, Bellevue, WA 98004

**DAZZLING STARS OF TOMORROW:**

FOUR GRAND PRIX WINNERS OF THE 3rd Annual  
BELLEVUE SYMPHONY CONCERTO COMPETITION  
AND GRAND PRIX WINNER OF THE 2024  
RUSSIAN CHAMBER MUSIC COMPETITION

**PRESHOW CONCERT AT 2:00 PM. COME EARLY**

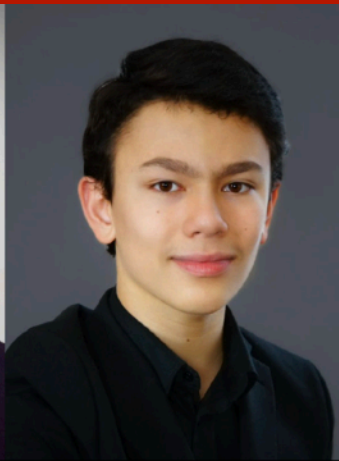
**FOR THE BEST SEATS AND PREPARE TO BE INSPIRED**  
PERFORMANCES BY THE SIX GRAND PRIX WINNERS  
FROM THE 3RD INTERNATIONAL FRENCH MUSIC  
PIANO COMPETITION

**Tickets: \$48 adults / \$37 youth/senior**



# BELLEVUE SYMPHONY

<https://bellevuesymphony.org>



## Bellevue Symphony Spring Concert

**SUNDAY, MARCH 2 AT 3 pm**

**Meydenbauer Theater**

**11100 NE 6th St, Bellevue, WA 98004**

Featuring four Grand Prix winners from the 2024 Bellevue Symphony Concerto Competition and Grand Prix winner from Russian Chamber Foundation of Seattle!

### COMPLETE PROGRAM:

**Jeffrey Zhao**, Chopin: Piano Concerto no. 1 in E minor, 1st mov

**Timothy Yu**, Bruch: Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, 1st mov

**Sarah Lee**, Dvorak: Cello Concerto in B Minor, Op. 104, 1st mov

**Alexander Vollmer**, Prokofiev: Piano Concerto no. 2, 1st mov

- INTERMISSION -

**Alvin Lee**, Ravel Piano Concerto in G, 3rd mov  
Tchaikovsky: Symphony no. 5 in E minor, op. 64  
Puccini: from Turandot, Nessun Dorma  
Special Guest: Michael Nim, Tenor





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## Welcome to Bellevue Symphony!

We are a professional orchestra comprised of 50+ musicians, led by renowned conductor and artistic director, Maestro Brian Davenport. Our flagship concert was held at The Meydenbauer Center in November 2019, featuring music by Mozart, Prokofiev, and Saint-Saens. We delight in bringing the magic of symphony to Bellevue, a flourishing city growing into a rich cultural center.

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## Artistic Director: Maestro Brian Davenport

Born in Walla Walla, Washington, Maestro A. Brian Davenport began his interest in music at the age of four. After obtaining his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Music from Harvard, he spent three years in Paris, France, studying music under the famous Nadia Boulanger, and conducting in Monte Carlo under the tutelage of Igor Markevitch. He has conducted orchestras in countries throughout the world, including China, Scandanavia, Germany, and Ukraine. In 1990, he conducted the Federal Way Symphony in the opening sellout performance of Beethoven's Ninth

Symphony for the Goodwill Games. He also conducted the world premiere of Handel's Messiah in Russian in the city of Kazan.

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## Artistic Advisor: Dr. Yelena Balabanova

Dr. Yelena Balabanova, a native of Kharkiv, Ukraine, is one of only 6 Steinway Classical Artists in WA state. She is an acclaimed soloist and is widely recognized for her extensive repertoire, original interpretations, innovative programs, and a sought-after clinician on healthy technique and artistry, presenting numerous workshops and masterclasses every year. Among Yelena's many credentials, she holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from CU-Boulder, received a Recognition Certificate from the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts for the Artistic Achievements of her Students, VIP from National Federation of Music Clubs, Teacher of Distinction from the Royal Conservatory of Music of Canada and Certificate of Appreciation for Teaching Mastery from the World Piano teachers Association in Singapore. In 2023,

Dr. Balabanova has been inducted into the Steinway Teacher Hall of Fame. Dr. Balabanova taught at the Renaissance Music Academy of VA, VA State University, University of CO at Boulder and was featured Artist in Residence at the CO Music Fest for four years. Yelena is a founder of International Conservatory Studio and the North Sound Federated Music Club. Her students have been recognized at many festivals and competitions across USA, Australia, and Europe, and have been awarded admissions to prestigious programs like Cleveland Institute of Music, BYU, Peabody, Wheaton, University of CO, Harvard, Philips-Andover, Chatham School of Music in Manchester, UK, Juilliard, Northwestern and others. Currently Yelena serves the community as a Board member of the WA Federation of Music Clubs and Chopin Foundation Northwest Council Vice-President.



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## Board of Directors:

- Dr. Sara Wagner, Executive Director
- Allan Park, President
- Dr. Adam Aleksander, 1st Vice President
- Nino Merabishvili, 2nd Vice President
- Dr. Hanna Cyba, Secretary
- Brian Davenport, Treasurer
- Dana Davenport, Stage Manager
- Jeff Elwell, Concert Manager
- Kevin Burton, Hospitality Manager

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## Bellevue Symphony Staff

- Bob Gale, Personnel Manager
- Deborah McClellan, Librarian

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## Advisors

- Dr. Natalya Ageyeva, Advisor
- Dr. Renato Fabbro, Advisor
- Conney Vernal, Advisor

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## Executive Director: Dr. Sara Wagner

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Dr. Sara Wagner, a native of Mainz, Germany, has dedicated her life to both the art of music and the practice of medicine. From an early age, she immersed herself in the world of music, initially studying piano before transitioning to vocal performance. Her passion for singing led to performances with Lyric Opera Northwest, now known as Bellevue Opera. With a deep love for classical music fostered through her musical training, Dr. Wagner brings both artistic appreciation and leadership to her role as the Executive Director of the Bellevue Symphony, a position she has held since March 2023.

In her capacity as Executive Director, Dr. Wagner is focused on broadening the Symphony's impact within the community. She has focused on expanding Bellevue Symphony's engagements with local senior groups, ensuring the arts remain accessible to all generations. A key part of her mission is to shape the cultural landscape of Bellevue through collaboration. To this end, Dr. Wagner is promoting outreach to the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, the Bellevue City Council, and the City of Bellevue, fostering partnerships that elevate the Symphony's visibility and impact in the region. She is a board certified family medicine physician with an osteopathic manipulative therapy practice in Juanita, WA. [sarawagnerdo.com](http://sarawagnerdo.com).

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## Official Sponsors:

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There are **dozens of conditions** that can be treated with **osteopathic manipulative therapy**, including:

-Headaches including migraines -Trigeminal neuralgia -Constipation -Irritable bowel syndrome  
-Acid reflux -TMJ dysfunction -Sensation of something in the throat, also known as globus  
-Postsurgical pain -Arthritic pain -Spasticity or other problems after stroke -Trouble singing  
-Athletic injuries  
-Many more

**Are you having trouble? Do you have pain?** Have you had injections, chiropractics, or even surgery, without improvement? Please come see Dr. Wagner - She would love to help!

425-324-9191 [Sara Wagner, DO PLLC](http://SaraWagnerDO PLLC) [Sarawagnerdo.com](http://Sarawagnerdo.com) to book an appointment  
11922 98th Ave NE  
Kirkland, WA 98034

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**B E R M A N**  
F I L M S





# BELLEVUE SYMPHONY

## OUR PROFESSIONAL ORCHESTRA MEMBERS



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### Violin 1

Valerie Tung, principal  
Winnie Chen Dungey  
Olivia Cottrell  
Alonso Tirado  
Kelly Marsh  
Karen Tadena

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### Violin 2

Elena Vukosavljev, principal  
Sooyean Oh  
Emily Ponten  
Heather Hunter  
Kathy Shaw  
Coral Sepulveda  
Monica Boros

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### Viola

Tricia Wu, principal  
Amy Werner-Allen  
Jennifer Glenn-Shoval  
Alessandra Barrett  
Danny Sheu  
Padua Canty

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### Cello

Mara Finkelstein, principal  
Mariah Larson  
William Spengler  
Kumiko Chiba  
Jared Ballenge

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### Bass

Attila Kiss, principal  
Moe Weisner  
John Convertino

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### Flute

Kate Mondragon, principal  
Helen Lee

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### Oboe

Jamie Sanidad, principal  
Bridget Long

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### Clarinet

Beverly Setzer, principal  
Lori Shepherd

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### Bassoon

Steven Morgan, principal  
Robyn Watson

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### Horn

Kyli White, principal  
Matthew Anderson  
Eric Bell  
Ben Johnson

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### Trumpet

Abram Sanderson, principal  
Scott Meredith

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### Trombone

Keith Winkle, principal  
Greg Schroeder  
Gerald Larkins

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### Tuba

Kevin Pih, principal

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### Tympani

Matt Drumm, principal

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### Percussion

Frank Ronneburg, principal





**BELLEVUE  
SYMPHONY**

# **PRE-CONCERT PROGRAM**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 2 AT 2 pm**

**Performed by select Grand Prix and Gold Medalists  
from the 3rd International French Music Piano Competition**

**Debussy: Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum**

Blake Kang

**Ibert: Petit âne blanc**

Celine Huang

**Debussy: La plus que lente**

Brian YuHong Wu

**Ravel: Une Barque sur l'océan**

Alexander Ma

**Ravel: Jeux d'eau**

Courtney Tam

**Faure: Dolly Suite: Kitty-Valse and Le pas espagnol**

Jane Kwon and Jason Kwon







# PRE-CONCERT PROGRAM

## SUNDAY, MARCH 2 AT 2 pm

### **Blake Kang** Debussy: Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum

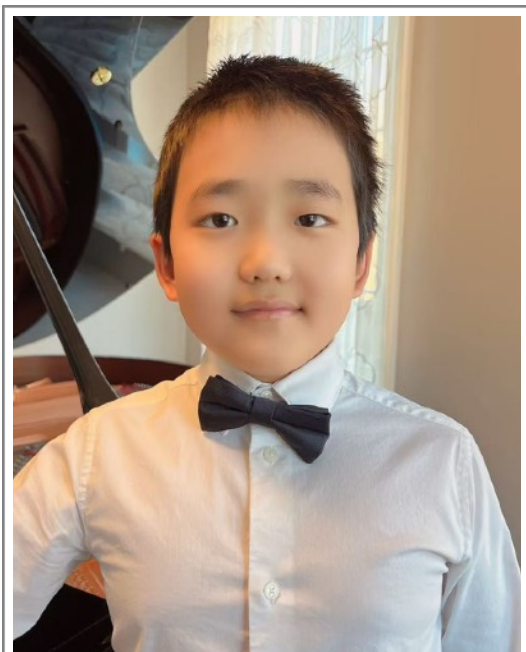
Blake Kang, 8, developed an early appreciation for music, inspired by listening to his mother play classical piano pieces. He began formal piano lessons with Ya Liu at age 6, and has been co-taught by Ya Liu and Dr. Thomas Lee since 2024. Though still in the early stages of his musical journey, Blake has already earned notable accolades, including Gold Medals in the 2025 International French Music Piano Competition, the 2024 Pacific Northwest Piano Competition, and the 2024 Classical Viennese Festival, as well as First Prize with Honor in the 2024 International Youth Music Competition.

Beyond his passion for music, Blake enjoys playing board games with his younger brother, is an avid swimmer, and just picked up basketball as his latest sport this past winter.

### **Celine Huang** Ibert: Petit âne blanc

Born in May 2015, Celine began her piano journey on December 2020 under the guidance of her teacher, Ni Liu. With dedication and passion, she has achieved remarkable accomplishments in 2024 including winning Gold Medal at the 2024 Classical Viennese Festival, a Bronze Medal at the 2024 Bach Festival International, Emma K.S. Loo recognition award at the 2024 Simon-Fiset Piano Competition.

Besides piano, Celine enjoys skiing, swimming, gymnastics and painting.



### **Brian YuHong Wu** Debussy: La plus que lente

Brian Wu is eleven years old and started learning piano at age five under Steinway Artist Dr. Yelena Balabanova. Practicing, performing and sharing his music have become big parts of his life.

Brian has been recognized with numerous awards in competitions and festivals. He is the First Prize winner in 2023 American Virtuoso International Music Competition, 2024 American Protege International Competition, 2024 International German Music Competition, 2024 Pacific International Piano Competition, and 2023 London Grand Prize Virtuoso. He gained the Second prize from International Mozart Competition Vienna 2023, Elevato Piano Competition 2023, the Third Prize and the Best Performance of Ludwig V. Beethoven in the 2024 WPTA Spain International Piano Competition. He rewarded as the Outstanding Performance in the 2023 International French Music Competition as well.

Brian also performed in Carnegie Hall, and Royal Albert Hall in London. Brian and his brother love to deliver relaxing and enjoyable pieces to community such as senior centers and charities. He passed the RCM Level 10 Practical Exam with First Class Honors.



# PRE-CONCERT PROGRAM

SUNDAY, MARCH 2 AT 2 pm

## Alexander Ma

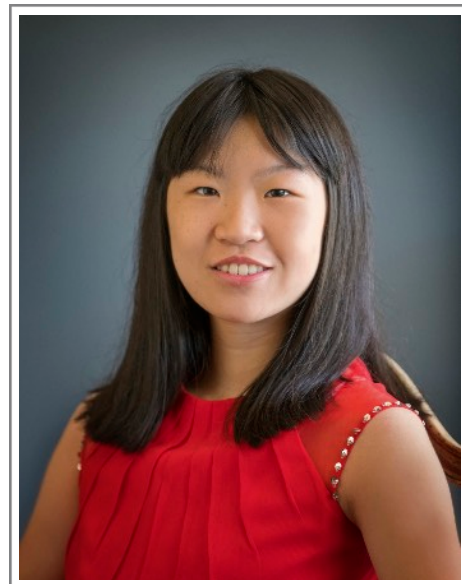
Ravel: Une Barque sur l'océan

I have spent the majority of my 16 years of life infatuated with music, and with piano in particular. As a toddler my hands first began to explore the keys on the upright piano in our family's living room. My mother took notice of my excitement in response to the sounds coming from this wonderful instrument, and thus began my path in piano. Since then piano has not only been a constant companion, but also my way of expressing myself and connecting with others. Under the guidance of Ms. Sandra Wright Shen I've grown in music, have participated in piano competition, and attended piano camps. Today I find inspiration in my favorite composers, Rachmaninoff and Ravel--often "seeing" the music in my mind as images that dance with the music as I play. I co-founded "Kids for Kindness," a charity where young musicians, like myself, bring joy to others in hospitals and nursing homes. For me, piano will always be a constant in my life.

## Courtney Tam

Ravel: Jeux d'eau

Courtney has been a student of Dr. Yelena Balabanova at the International Conservatory Studio since 2011. In 2023, Courtney notably performed with the Everett Philharmonic Orchestra as the Grand Prix winner of SCMTA Concerto Competition. She also performed at Carnegie Hall as a 1st prize winner of 2023 American Virtuoso IMC. Courtney's other awards include Platinum medal from WPTA Singapore IPC; Adjudicator's Choice Gold medal from International German MPC; Gold medals at Pacific NW, Chopin NW (solo and concerto), and Northern Lights International Competition; EMTA Best of Festival for three years in a row; 1st prize at Charleston International Competition; two times finalist at the Seattle Symphony Concerto Competition, and many more. In addition to her music studies with Dr. Balabanova, Courtney attended the Vancouver Piano Sessions summer camp and Seattle Chamber Music Society Academy, and received a full scholarship to Seattle Piano Institute at the University of Washington. Courtney has performed in fundraising concerts for NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), war relief efforts for Ukraine, combating racial injustice against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and supplies for rescue animals at Seattle Humane Society.



## Jane Kwon and Jason Kwon (piano duet)

Faure: Dolly Suite: Kitty-Valse and Le pas espagnol

Jane is currently a 13 year old, attending Forest Ridge School of the Sacred Heart in Bellevue, Washington. She began to learn the piano at the age of 7 and started lessons with her teacher, SH Youn, in 2021. At a young age, Jane was surrounded by music from her organist grandmother and her dad playing the violin. Jane recently won a Gold Medal at the 2025 Chopin NW Competition. Jane has been recognized in many competitions including top prizes at the Russian Chamber Music Foundation of Seattle, Virtuoso Artistic Festival, Pacific NW Piano Competition, International French Piano Competition, Alternate State Winner of MTNA, and Best of Festival Award at the Music Era Competition. Jane was also the Grand Prize Winner of the 2023 Bellevue Symphony Concerto Competition, allowing her to debut with the Bellevue Symphony. She will be performing Saint Saen's piano concerto no. 5 in F, 1st movement with the Evergreen Orchestra in March. Jane actively volunteers as a piano accompanist at her local church and school choir. In her free time, she enjoys reading, playing soccer, and acting in musicals.

Jason is currently a 16 year old sophomore attending Newport High school. Jason has been studying with SH Youn since 2021. He was a Gold Medalist in the 2024 International French Piano Competition, Gold Medalist for 2022 TIME ERA Festival, Gold Chamber Medalist in the Seattle Virtuoso Piano Competition, Silver Medalist in the 2022 Pacific Northwest Piano Competition, Silver Medalist at the 2022 Chopin NW Festival, Bronze Medalist in the 2022 Russian Chamber Music Competition, Gold Medalist at the 2024 Performing Arts Festival of the Eastside (PAFE), and winner of the 2023 SCMTA Concerto Competition, allowing him to play alongside the Evergreen Community Orchestra. One day, he hopes to start a music initiative and provide free music classes for young students in his local community.



**BELLEVUE  
SYMPHONY**

# **PROGRAM**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 2 AT 3 pm**

**Chopin: Piano concerto no. 1 in E minor, op. 11, 1st movement**

JEFFREY ZHAO, piano

**Bruch: Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26, 1st movement**

TIMOTHY YU, violin

**Dvorak: Cello concerto in B minor, Op. 104, 1st movement**

SARAH LEE, cello

**Prokofiev Piano Concerto no. 2 in G minor, op. 16, 1st movement**

ALEXANDER VOLLMER, piano

- INTERMISSION/PRESENTATION OF AWARDS -

Presented by Dr. Yelena Balabanova and Dr. Natalya Ageyeva. Scholarship prizes provided by Mr. Jeff Elwell and Russian Chamber Music Foundation of Seattle

**Ravel Piano Concerto in G, 3rd movement**

ALVIN LEE, piano

**Tchaikovsky: Symphony no. 5 in E minor, op. 64**

Andante - Allegro con anima

Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza - Moderato con anima

Valse (Allegro moderato)

Finale (Andante maestoso - Allegro vivace)

**Puccini: from Turandot, Nessun Dorma**

Special Guest: Michael Nim, Tenor

**BELLEVUE SYMPHONY CONCERTO COMPETITION  
GRAND PRIX WINNER, JUNIOR DIVISION  
SUNDAY, MARCH 2 AT 3 pm**



**TIMOTHY YU, violin**

**Bruch: Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26, 1st movement**

Timothy Yu, age 11, received his first violin lesson from his mother at the tender age of five. He then became a member of the Bellevue Youth Symphony Orchestra in 2019. Timothy then became the concertmaster in the Symphonette Orchestra during the 2022-23. In 2021, he earned third place in the International Music Competition OPUS, and secured second place in the Marker and Pioneer International Music Competition.

In 2024, Timothy continued to distinguish himself by winning the under-18 Young Violin Competition held by the Portland Chamber Orchestra. He also achieved the distinction of being a finalist in the prestigious International Anton Rubinstein Competitive-Violin Junior competition 2024. He also garnered Honorable Mention in the 2024 Washington State MTNA Performance Competition-Junior String.

Timothy embarked on a journey with Chamber Music Studies and Musicianship in Seattle Conservatory of Music 2023-24. His participation in the Seattle Chamber Music Society's Academy program in Spring/Fall 2024 further enriched his musical education and provided valuable collaborative experiences.

Under the tutelage of Professor Ronald Patterson, Timothy continues to refine his craft, following the footsteps of his previous instructor Gloria Guo, who ignited his passion for the violin.

Timothy is a 6th-grade student at International School in Bellevue, WA, USA. Timothy is an avid reader, and enjoys playing tennis and video games.



**BELLEVUE SYMPHONY CONCERTO COMPETITION  
GRAND PRIX WINNER, JUNIOR DIVISION  
SUNDAY, MARCH 2 AT 3 pm**



**ALVIN LEE, piano**

**Ravel Piano Concerto in G  
3rd movement**

11 year old Alvin Lee is a 6th grader at Skyview Middle School in Bothell, WA. He has been an elite student of SH Youn since the age of 7. Within two months, he won his first Gold Medals at the Classical Viennese Festival and Sonafest Competition. He then won Gold and Platinum Medals from the following competitions: Virtuoso Artists Festival, Classical Viennese Festival, Pacific Northwest Piano Competition, Chopin Northwest Competition, Performance Arts Festival of Eastside (Solo, Concerto and Adjudicator's Top Choice Award), Eastside Symphony Concerto Competition, Bellevue Symphony Concerto Competition, Russian Chamber Music Competition, Pacific International Piano Competition, 9th Annual Rome International Music Competition, Brussels International Music Competition, International German Music Piano Competition, Ravel International Music Competition, Canadian International Music Competition.

Most recently, Alvin won two Grand Prix awards at the 2025 International French Music Piano Competition for both solo and concerto divisions. On February 8, Alvin earned a Grand Prix Gold medal at the 2025 Chopin Northwest Piano Competition.

On January 2024, Alvin made his debut at Carnegie Hall. He most recently won Platinum Medal at the 2024 Pacific Northwest Piano Competition, Grand Prix at the 2024 Time Era Music Festival and Honorable Mention Prize at the 2024 Washington State MTNA Junior Piano Competition.

This past December, Alvin performed two movements of his concerto with Mukilteo Community Orchestra after winning the 2024 SCMTA Concerto Competition.

Every Summer, Alvin loves spending time at his second home in Seoul, South Korea and loves international traveling and cooking.

**BELLEVUE SYMPHONY CONCERTO COMPETITION  
GRAND PRIX WINNER, SENIOR DIVISION  
SUNDAY, MARCH 2 AT 3 pm**



**SARAH LEE, cello**

**Dvorak: Cello concerto in B Minor, Op. 104, 1st movement**

Sarah Lee, age 17, is a Senior at Westview High School from Portland, Oregon. She currently studies with Hyun-Jin Kim. She serves as principal cellist of the Portland Youth Philharmonic and Camerata PYP.

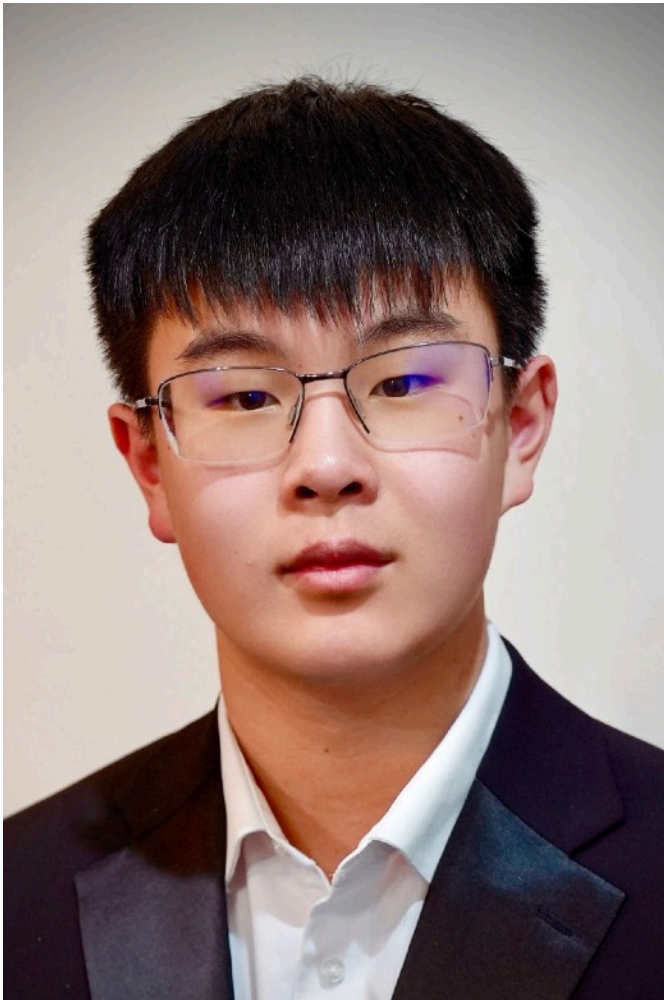
As a soloist, her top achievements include first prizes for the National Federation of Music Clubs Mary Cox Award, New York International, State and Regional MTNA Senior String Performance Competition, OMEA State Solo and Chamber Ensemble Contest, and the Symphony Guild Young Artist Competition. She participated in the 2022 All-National Honors Ensembles Symphony Orchestra and All-Northwest Orchestra as principal.

Sarah performed as a soloist in the 100th anniversary season of PYP as the winner of the 2023 PYP Concerto Competition. She also had the privilege of being selected to perform as a soloist with members of the Oregon Symphony by winning the MetroArts Young Artists Debut! Competition. Sarah attended renowned music camps such as the National Symphony Orchestra's Summer Music Institute, Boston University Tanglewood Institute, International Cello Institute, Vivace International Music Festival, and Philadelphia International Music Camp & Festival.

Sarah wants to use her love of music to benefit and heal communities that have yet to experience the joys of music. She volunteers at Project Prelude and Music4Harmony to serve underprivileged communities through teaching and performance. Besides playing cello, Sarah enjoys playing piano, soccer, skiing, reading, and hanging out with her friends.



**BELLEVUE SYMPHONY CONCERTO COMPETITION  
GRAND PRIX WINNER, SENIOR DIVISION  
SUNDAY, MARCH 2 AT 3 pm**



**JEFFREY ZHAO, piano**

Chopin: Piano concerto no. 1 in e minor,  
op. 11, 1st movement

Jeffrey Zhao is an accomplished young pianist from Bellevue, Washington. At the age of 17, he already possesses an extensive repertoire that includes many Beethoven sonatas and several complete concertos.

Jeffrey has received over 100 gold medals, first place awards and other top honors in local, regional and international piano competitions. His most recent achievements include being selected as both the gold medalist and the most memorable performer at the 2024 Pacific International Piano Competition as well as the 2024 International German Music Piano Competition, and the first place winner of the senior division in the 2024 Bellevue Symphony Concerto Competition. Jeffrey made his concerto debut with the Cascade Symphony Orchestra in October of 2022. Other accomplishments include being selected as a finalist in the Seattle Symphony Young Artists Concerto Competition, a concerto finalist at the Seattle Young Artists Music Festival and as a finalist for both the 2023 and 2024 Chicago International Piano Competitions. Jeffrey has performed in both Benaroya Hall in Seattle and Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue.

Jeffrey has studied piano with Maria Maltseva since 2014. He loves to share his passion for music and regularly performs at elder care centers. In his free time, Jeffrey skis and pursues competition math.

**RUSSIAN CHAMBER MUSIC FOUNDATION  
CONCERTO COMPETITION GRAND PRIX WINNER  
SUNDAY, MARCH 2 AT 3 pm**



**ALEXANDER VOLLMER, piano**

Prokofiev Piano Concerto no. 2 in G minor,  
op. 16, 1st movement

Alexander Vollmer, a 9th grader at Lakeside School, started learning piano at the age of 9. His gift for piano and his endeavors were quickly recognized and rewarded via numerous top prizes in competitions. The highlights include the First Prize in the American Virtuoso International Music Competition (2022) and the Absolute First Prize and Overall Poetic Interpretation Special Prize in the UK International Music Competition (2023), Gold Medal in the 2024 Chopin Northwest Piano Competition, Bronze Medalist in 2024 Piano Star International Competition, two Grand Prix in 2024 RCMFS Competition (solo & concerto), Double Platinum Medals at the 2024 Pacific Northwest Piano Competition, the Third Place in 2024 Elevato International Youth Piano Competition, two Distinguished Gold Medals in SIPC Classical Viennese Festival (2022 & 2023), and many others.

Most recently he won the Utah Philharmonic Orchestra Concerto Competition in Salt Lake City, Utah and won the Grand Prix Gold Medal at the 2025 Chopin Northwest Piano Competition. He is the 2024 MTNA Regional Senior Piano Duet Winner, and for two consecutive years a WSMTA State Recitalist Winner. Alexander has collaborated with the Eastside Symphony, TMC Orchestra, and Mukilteo Community Orchestra.

He has showcased his talent at prestigious venues such as the Weill Recital Hall in Carnegie Hall, and the Beethoven Haus, Germany. Alexander was accepted into the 2023 Seattle Piano Institute. Alexander has been studying with SH Youn since 2021.



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**SPECIAL GUEST: Michael Nim**  
**SUNDAY, MARCH 2 AT 3 pm**



**Michael Nim, Tenor**  
Puccini: from Turandot, “Nessun Dorma”

Michael Nim has enjoyed a flourishing career of singing Opera and classical music since 2013, and has performed all over the world.

After receiving his training in Opera and stage since 2005, Michael began his professional appearances by performing in leading roles such as Alfredo (La Traviata), Rodolfo (La Boheme), Don Jose (Carmen), Ferrando (Cosi fan Tutte), Don Ottavio (Don Giovanni), and many others.

He has made operatic appearances in the United States, United Kingdom, Spain, Germany, Sicily and Finland.

Michael is destined to continue his burgeoning career and plan to expand his performances in more theaters and concert halls in the near future.

His next project is with Bellevue Opera, reprising the role of Rodolfo in La Boheme, and then teaching in Abruzzo, Italy for the summer.

## BELLEVUE SYMPHONY CONCERTO COMPETITION GRAND PRIX WINNER, JUNIOR DIVISION Alternate Grand Prix Winners



### ALEX CHEN, cello

Alex, a 12-year-old 7th grader at the International School in Bellevue, has shown a deep passion for music. He began his cello journey at the age of 7 under the guidance of Dr. Leslie Marckx and collaborative pianist Dr. Litan Hsu, whose mentorship has been instrumental in shaping his musical growth and abilities.

Over the years, Alex has received several recognitions for his talent. He won the SYSO concerto competition during the academic year of 2023-2024, which he performed solo with the orchestra at Benaroya Hall. He achieved success in PAFE competitions, and has been recognized twice by MTNA. He is also a two-time recipient of the Young Artist Special Recognition (2023/2024) and was a concerto competition finalist in 2024. Additionally, Alex has earned First Prize in the OPUS Competition three times at the state level and once nationally.

Outside of music, Alex is an avid baseball fan. He also enjoys playing video games with his siblings, and spending time with his dog, Chume!

### WILLIAM FENG, piano

William Feng, 12 years old, a 7th grader at Lakeside School, WA, has excelled in just six years of piano study with Dr. Christopher Bowlby at the Chopin Academy of Music.

William is the Washington State Winner of the 2024 MTNA Junior Piano Competition. He also won First Prize at the 2024 Seattle International Piano Competition and First Prize at the 2024 Carmel Klavier International Piano Competition. Many other top awards he has received include First Prize with Judges' Distinction Award at the 2022 American Protégé International Competition, Gold Medal with Helen Belvin Scholarship at the Chopin NW 2023, Absolute First Prize at the 2023 UK International Music Competition, and seven Distinguished Gold Medals at the SIPF Festivals (Bach, Classical Viennese, and Virtuoso Artists).

William has performed in venues including Carnegie Hall, Scottsdale Performing Arts Center, and Benaroya Hall. William loves music. He founded the Music Inspires New Day (MIND) club and magazine at Lakeside School.





## **BELLEVUE SYMPHONY CONCERTO COMPETITION GRAND PRIX WINNER, SENIOR DIVISION**

### **Alternate Grand Prix Winners**



### **RACHEL JUNG, violin**

Rachel Jung is 11th grade in Bellevue School District Advanced Program and has won numerous first place awards at violin competitions including Seattle MTA, the Elite International Music Competition, and the Performing Arts Festival of the Eastside where she received the Engstrom Memorial Award, the Edgar Borup Memorial Award and Concerto Playoffs 1st place Award. And recently she has been selected as a winner of National YounArts, Bainbridge Symphony Young Artist, and Grand Prix of Bellevue Symphony Concerto competition.

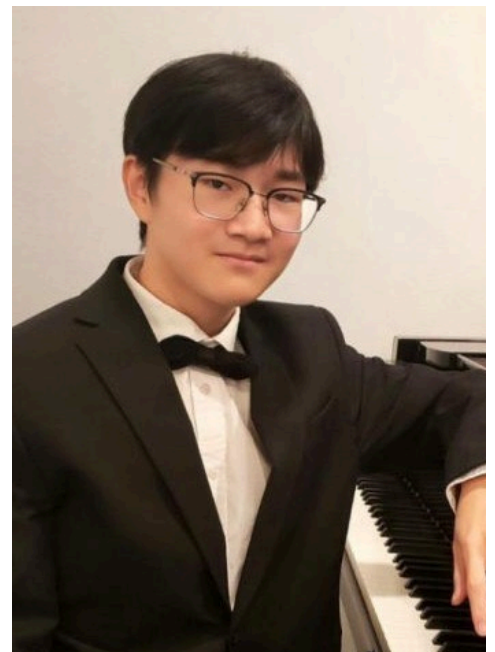
Rachel performed as a soloist with the Seattle Symphony and the Eastside Symphony after winning their Young Artist concerto competition. She performed at Carnegie Hall in New York City with the National Youth Orchestra. She gave a live solo performance for Music Under the Stars summer event hosted by Seattle Chamber Music Society, and she performed on Classical KING FM Northwest Focus Live with the Schumann Piano Quintet.

Rachel has participated in math competitions, successfully qualifying for the American Invitational Mathematics Exam (AIME).

### **MINJAE KIM, piano**

Minjae Kim is a 18 year old senior at North Creek High School. Along with his brother, they were the 2023 Regional MTNA winners. Minjae recently won First place at the 2024 Chicago International Piano Competition. Minjae has earned many Gold Medals: Chopin NW Competition, Russian Chamber Music Competition, Distinguished Gold Medalist at Virtuoso Competition, 1st place at the Carles & Sofia International Piano Competition, Canadian International Music Competition, Pacific International Piano Competition, two-time Finalist for Seattle Symphony Competition, winner of WMEA's Solo and Ensemble, 1st prize winner of KMA Competition. He was one of the featured soloists for Mukilteo Community Orchestra 2022 and 2024 Fall Concert.

He has performed at Benaroya Hall, Mercer Island Burbank Park and Chamber concert venues. Most recently he won two highly-coveted Platinum medals at the 2024 Pacific Northwest Piano Competition, Grand Prix at the 2024 International French Music Piano Competition and Grand Prix at the 2024 Time Era Music Festival. Besides music, Minjae loves computer programming, computer gaming and tennis. Minjae is an elite student of SH Youn.



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**RUSSIAN CHAMBER MUSIC FOUNDATION CONCERTO  
COMPETITION GRAND PRIX ALTERNATE WINNER**

**ERIC CHAN, cello**

Eric Chan is a 13 year old who resides in Bellevue, Washington. He began playing cello at the age of four and is currently a student of Olga Ruvinov. At the age of seven, Eric made his first debut with his elementary school's Christmas choir for the winter concert. A frequent participant in local competitions, Eric has won multiple 1st and 2nd prizes in the Performing Arts Festival of the Eastside, and is also a 2nd prize winner of the Opus Music Competition, advancing to the national level.

In addition to his solo work, Eric is an avid orchestral musician, playing with SYSO from 2021, currently at the Junior level, is a member of both his school advanced and chamber orchestras, and was chosen for the All-State Middle School Orchestra.

In his free time, Eric enjoys playing golf, reading, and listening to music.





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## PROGRAM NOTES

# Chopin Piano Concerto No. 1 in E Minor, Op. 11, First Mov.

**Introduction** Frédéric Chopin's **Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor, Op. 11**, composed in 1830, stands as one of the most beloved and frequently performed works in the piano concerto repertoire. The first movement, marked **Allegro maestoso**, is a grand and lyrical opening that showcases Chopin's poetic and virtuosic approach to the piano, complemented by a refined yet somewhat secondary orchestral accompaniment.

**Structure and Form** The movement follows a **modified sonata form**, consisting of:

- **Orchestral Exposition:** The orchestra introduces the main themes, setting the stage for the piano's entrance.
- **Piano Exposition:** The soloist restates and embellishes the themes, adding Chopin's signature lyricism.
- **Development:** The interplay between the piano and orchestra explores different keys and modulations.
- **Recapitulation:** The main themes return, with the piano taking a more prominent role.
- **Coda:** A brilliant conclusion featuring virtuosic passages leading to a grand ending.

**Themes and Melodic Character** The first movement presents two primary themes:

1. **First Theme:** Introduced by the orchestra, it is a noble and somewhat melancholic melody in E minor.
2. **Second Theme:** A more lyrical and expressive melody, introduced by the piano in B major, revealing Chopin's deep affinity for cantabile writing.

Chopin's treatment of these themes is highly decorative, featuring intricate embellishments, virtuosic arpeggios, and dynamic contrasts that highlight the soloist's expressive capabilities.

**Orchestration and Texture** While Chopin was primarily a pianist, his orchestration in this movement is functional yet often criticized for being conventional. The orchestra provides harmonic and rhythmic support rather than engaging in a true dialogue with the soloist. The piano dominates with dazzling figurations and expressive phrasing.

**Harmonic Language and Modulation** Chopin employs a rich harmonic palette with frequent modulations and chromaticism. His harmonic progressions are fluid, transitioning smoothly between keys, particularly in the development section where he explores distant tonal centers before resolving back to E minor in the recapitulation.

**Technical and Expressive Challenges** For the pianist, this movement demands:

- Exceptional control over **ornamentation** and **rubato**.
- Mastery of **legato phrasing** to maintain the cantabile quality of the melodies.
- Brilliant execution of **scales, arpeggios, and octaves** in virtuosic passages.
- Balance between the piano and orchestral texture to ensure musical cohesion.

**Conclusion** Chopin's first movement of the E minor Concerto is a work of profound expressivity and dazzling virtuosity. While the orchestration remains secondary, the piano part is rich in melodic beauty and technical brilliance, making it a favorite among pianists and audiences alike. Its seamless blend of poetic lyricism and technical display cements Chopin's reputation as one of the greatest composers for the piano.

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## **PROGRAM NOTES**

### **Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26, 1st Mov.**

Max Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26 is one of the most beloved violin concertos in the classical repertoire. Composed between 1864 and 1866 and revised with input from the renowned violinist Joseph Joachim, the concerto has become a staple in violin performance. The first movement, "Vorspiel" (Prelude): Allegro moderato, serves as an introduction to the full work and is noted for its deeply expressive and dramatic character.

The first movement of Bruch's concerto is unconventional in its prelude-like structure. It acts as a free-flowing introduction rather than the traditional sonata-allegro form seen in many concertos. The movement seamlessly transitions into the second movement without a definitive ending, making it an integral part of the concerto's overarching narrative.

#### **Musical Characteristics**

**Orchestral Introduction:** The movement opens with a dark and solemn orchestral introduction, setting a dramatic and expressive tone.

**Violin Entry:** The solo violin enters with an impassioned and expressive theme, marked by its broad lyrical lines and dramatic intensity.

**Development:** Instead of a formal development section, Bruch emphasizes dialogue between the soloist and orchestra, with the violin engaging in expressive, cadenza-like passages.

**Dynamics & Orchestration:** The movement features a rich and Romantic orchestration, utilizing lush string textures and warm harmonic progressions.

**Cadenzas & Virtuosity:** The solo violin part contains elements of improvisatory-like cadenzas, demanding technical precision and deep musical expression.

#### **Emotional and Interpretative Aspects**

Bruch's first movement is characterized by its rich Romantic lyricism, blending melancholy, passion, and nobility. Violinists often interpret the movement with great freedom, emphasizing the expressive rubato and long, singing phrases.

#### **Conclusion**

The first movement of Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1 serves as a powerful and evocative opening, setting the stage for the lyrical second movement and the energetic finale. Its passionate character and violinistic brilliance make it one of the most cherished works in the violin concerto repertoire.



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## PROGRAM NOTES

# Dvořák's Cello Concerto in B Minor, Op. 104, First Mov.

### Introduction

Antonín Dvořák's *Cello Concerto in B Minor, Op. 104* is one of the most celebrated works in the cello repertoire. Composed between 1894 and 1895 during his tenure in the United States, the concerto blends Czech folk elements with the expansive sonorities of the Romantic era. The first movement, marked *Allegro*, is notable for its dramatic structure, lyrical themes, and orchestral integration of the solo cello.

### Structural Analysis

The first movement follows a traditional sonata-allegro form, comprising an exposition, development, recapitulation, and coda. The orchestration is lush and symphonic, with the solo cello emerging as an equal voice rather than merely a dominant soloist.

#### 1. Exposition:

- The movement opens with a powerful orchestral introduction, presenting the main thematic material. The primary theme is bold and noble, introduced by the clarinet before being developed by the full orchestra.
- The solo cello enters with a modified version of the first theme, showcasing its lyrical and expressive qualities. A secondary theme follows, more tender and songlike, reflecting Dvořák's Bohemian melodic influence.
- The orchestral and soloist interplay is dynamic, with the cello part displaying both virtuosic and cantabile elements.

#### 2. Development:

- Thematic material undergoes transformation, moving through different keys and orchestral textures.
- There is an increase in tension, with rapid modulations and virtuosic cello passages, leading to a climactic orchestral passage.

#### 3. Recapitulation:

- The main themes return, now altered and embellished.
- The solo cello takes on a more assertive role, reinforcing its dialogue with the orchestra.

#### 4. Coda:

- The movement concludes with a dramatic and powerful coda, emphasizing the heroic and expressive nature of the first theme.
- The final measures feature soaring cello lines and a majestic orchestral conclusion.

### Thematic and Harmonic Considerations

Dvořák masterfully employs Czech folk-inspired melodies, rich harmonic progressions, and intricate interplay between the soloist and orchestra. The contrast between the forceful, dramatic main theme and the lyrical secondary theme creates an engaging narrative.

### Orchestration and Texture

The concerto is symphonic in its orchestration, treating the cello as an integrated voice within the ensemble. The use of woodwinds, particularly the clarinet and flute, adds color, while the brass and strings provide depth and power. The cello line is written with both virtuosity and expressivity, demanding technical prowess and lyrical sensitivity from the performer.

### Conclusion

The first movement of Dvořák's *Cello Concerto in B Minor* is a masterful balance of lyrical expression, thematic development, and orchestral grandeur. It exemplifies the Romantic concerto form while incorporating the composer's distinctive nationalistic elements. This movement sets the stage for the profound emotional journey that continues throughout the concerto, making it a cornerstone of the cello repertoire.

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## PROGRAM NOTES

# Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 16

Introduction Sergei Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 16, is a monumental work known for its technical demands, emotional intensity, and innovative harmonic language. The first movement, *Andantino – Allegretto*, stands out for its dramatic structure, virtuosic piano writing, and orchestral depth. Originally composed in 1912-1913 and revised in 1923 following the loss of the original manuscript, the concerto embodies both Prokofiev's early boldness and his later refinement.

### Form and Structure

The first movement follows a broad sonata form but with Prokofiev's idiosyncratic treatment. It begins with a lyrical and melancholic *Andantino* theme in the piano, which develops into increasingly complex and expressive passages. This section gradually builds tension, leading to the explosive cadenza, which is among the most challenging in piano literature. The movement transitions into an *Allegretto*, incorporating rhythmic and harmonic elements that highlight Prokofiev's modernist tendencies. The recapitulation brings back the initial themes with greater intensity, culminating in a dramatic orchestral and piano interplay.

### Technical and Interpretative Challenges

The first movement demands exceptional technical prowess from the pianist. The lengthy cadenza, structured as a quasi-independent piece within the movement, presents rapid scales, arpeggios, and complex polyrhythms, requiring extraordinary precision and control. The dynamic contrast between lyrical and explosive passages necessitates deep interpretative insight, as the pianist must navigate between tender expressiveness and raw power.

### Orchestration and Harmonic Language

Prokofiev's orchestration in this movement balances the piano's dominance with a rich, dynamic orchestral texture. The harmonic language is highly chromatic, featuring abrupt modulations and unexpected dissonances that contribute to the movement's dramatic character. The orchestral support reinforces the shifting moods, from somber lyricism to intense, almost violent outbursts.

### Historical and Stylistic Context

Composed during Prokofiev's early years at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, the concerto reflects his burgeoning experimentalism. The 1913 premiere was met with mixed reactions, with some critics bewildered by its complexity. The revision in 1923 retained the essence of the original while expanding its harmonic and textural scope. The work embodies elements of Russian Romanticism infused with Prokofiev's signature modernist edge, bridging traditional concerto form with 20th-century innovations.

### Conclusion

The first movement of Piano Concerto No. 2 is a masterpiece of contrast, virtuosity, and structural innovation. It showcases Prokofiev's unique voice as a composer, blending lyricism with intense rhythmic drive and harmonic daring. This movement remains a formidable challenge and an artistic triumph, continuing to captivate pianists and audiences alike.

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## PROGRAM NOTES

# Ravel's Piano Concerto in G Major, Third Mov. (Presto)

**Introduction** Maurice Ravel's *Piano Concerto in G Major* is one of the most celebrated concertos of the 20th century. Composed between 1929 and 1931, it reflects Ravel's fascination with jazz and Basque musical influences, as well as his impeccable orchestration and harmonic refinement. The third movement, marked *Presto*, serves as a thrilling conclusion to the concerto, showcasing dazzling virtuosity, rhythmic precision, and orchestral brilliance.

**Form and Structure** The third movement is a *rondo* characterized by its high-energy tempo and perpetual motion. It follows an *ABACABA* structure, where the main theme recurs with contrasting episodes. This movement is driven by rapid passages in the piano, sharp syncopations, and sudden shifts in harmony and orchestration.

1. **Main Theme (A):** The movement begins explosively with a rapid and playful theme in the piano, accompanied by punctuated interjections from the orchestra. The theme is light, agile, and full of rhythmic vitality.
2. **First Episode (B):** A contrasting, slightly more lyrical but still energetic section follows, introducing new textures and harmonic colors.
3. **Return of A:** The original theme reappears with subtle variations.
4. **Second Episode (C):** This section presents even greater harmonic daring, employing dissonances and jazz-influenced elements.
5. **Return of A:** The main theme is restated once again, maintaining its breakneck pace.
6. **Modified Episode (B'):** The previous B section returns but with increased intensity and orchestral interplay.
7. **Final Return of A and Coda:** The movement concludes with a final, intensified version of the main theme, driving to a breathtaking and decisive close.

### Pianistic and Orchestral Features

- The piano writing in this movement is exceptionally virtuosic, requiring fleet-fingered precision, control over rapid hand-crossings, and clear articulation.
- The orchestration is crisp and brilliant, featuring Ravel's signature transparency and innovative use of instrumental colors.
- Rhythmic complexity is a hallmark, with frequent syncopations, rapid meter changes, and unexpected accents that give the music a sense of spontaneity.
- Jazz influences, particularly in harmonic choices and rhythmic drive, are evident throughout.

**Interpretative Challenges** Performing the *Presto* movement requires immense technical skill, stamina, and interpretative clarity. The pianist must balance precision with expressive nuance, ensuring that the relentless motion does not compromise articulation. Additionally, coordination between soloist and orchestra is crucial to maintaining the movement's electrifying energy and cohesion.

**Conclusion** The third movement of Ravel's *Piano Concerto in G Major* stands as a dazzling example of 20th-century piano writing, blending technical brilliance with Ravel's distinctive harmonic language and jazz-infused rhythmic vitality. It provides a thrilling conclusion to the concerto, leaving audiences captivated by its sheer momentum and exuberance.



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## PROGRAM NOTES

# Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, Op. 64

### Introduction

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, Op. 64, is one of the composer's most famous and frequently performed works. Composed in 1888, the symphony is characterized by its emotional depth, cyclic structure, and dramatic intensity. This report explores the historical background, structure, themes, and critical reception of the symphony.

### Historical Context

Tchaikovsky composed Symphony No. 5 during a period of self-doubt following the mixed reception of his previous symphony (No. 4). However, the Fifth Symphony, despite early criticism, later became a staple of the orchestral repertoire. It was premiered in Saint Petersburg on November 17, 1888, conducted by the composer himself.

### Structure and Analysis

The symphony consists of four movements, unified by a recurring "fate" theme:

- 1. Andante – Allegro con anima (E Minor)**  
The symphony opens with a slow, somber clarinet theme, which sets the tone for the entire work. The movement transitions into a vigorous allegro section, featuring a dramatic interplay between lyrical and stormy passages.
- 2. Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza (D Major)**  
This movement is a lyrical and expressive piece dominated by a famous horn solo. The theme undergoes several variations and reaches a climax before returning to a subdued conclusion.
- 3. Valse: Allegro moderato (A Major)**  
Instead of a traditional scherzo, Tchaikovsky employs a graceful waltz. The movement maintains a light and elegant quality while still hinting at the underlying melancholy of the symphony.
- 4. Finale: Andante maestoso – Allegro vivace (E Major)**  
The final movement brings back the "fate" theme, now transformed into a triumphant, march-like passage. The symphony concludes with a powerful, victorious coda in the major key, symbolizing a resolution of struggle.

### Themes and Interpretation

The recurring "fate" theme suggests a programmatic approach, though Tchaikovsky never explicitly provided a narrative. Scholars often interpret the symphony as a journey from despair to triumph, reflecting themes of destiny, struggle, and redemption. The transformation of the initial somber theme into a grand, celebratory finale reinforces this interpretation.

### Critical Reception and Legacy

Upon its premiere, the symphony received mixed reviews. Some critics found it overly sentimental, while others praised its orchestration and emotional power. Over time, however, it has gained universal acclaim and remains one of Tchaikovsky's most performed works. Conductors and audiences alike appreciate its deep expressiveness and dramatic resolution.

### Conclusion

Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, Op. 64, is a masterpiece of orchestral music, showcasing the composer's skill in melody, orchestration, and emotional depth. Its journey from darkness to light resonates with audiences, ensuring its place as a cornerstone of the classical symphonic repertoire.