

 **Bard College Conservatory of Music**

Advanced Performance Studies Program: Final Recital

Yun Chen, *piano*

**Tuesday, May 17, 2022, at 4 PM
László Z. Bitó '60 Conservatory Building**

Divertimento for Violin and Piano

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

Sinfonia
Danses Suisses
Scherzo
Pas de Deux
a) Adagio b) Variation c) Coda

Zongheng Zhang, *violin*

Sonata No. 2 SO 613 for Cello and Piano

Leo Ornstein (1895-2002)

Nathan Francisco, *cello*

—Intermission—

Trio in A minor, Op. 50 for Piano, Violin and Cello

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-93)

I. Pezzo elegiaco
II. A. Tema con variazioni
B. Variazione finale e coda

Enikő Samu, *violin*
Nathan Francisco, *cello*

Program Notes

Igor Stravinsky was a Russian composer, pianist and conductor, who later acquired French and American citizenship. He is widely considered one of the most important and influential composers of the 20th century and a pivotal figure in modernist music.

In 1931, Stravinsky rearranged his ballet *Le Baiser de la fée* into a concert suite in orchestra version, titled *Divertimento*. The premiere of this piece coincided with the 35th anniversary of the death of Tchaikovsky, who was one of Stravinsky's favorite musicians. Later, in 1932, the piece was also arranged into the version for violin and piano by Stravinsky and his close friend Samuel Dushkin (1891-1976), and published in the same year by the Russian Music Publishing Company, and then by Boosey & Hawkes.

Although he was not a violinist himself, Stravinsky tried many unique ideas, generating musical figures independently of what is usually suggested by the physical configuration of the instrument and the familiar movements of the player's fingers, and thereby developing a kind of 'anti-violinistic' writing style. The years 1920 to 1951 mark the neoclassic period of Stravinsky's career, during which time most of his violin works were completed. In this thirty-year span, Stravinsky tried to compose in an objective and rational way, demonstrating a cool and simple style of writing. Stravinsky applied his own distinct 20th-century approach to 18th-century composition forms, preserving features of the Baroque period, and inserting novel musical elements masterfully.

Ukraine-born Leo Ornstein was an experimental composer and pianist of the early twentieth century who emigrated to America in 1906. As a composer, he was the first important composer to make extensive use of tone clusters; as a pianist, he was considered a world-class talent recognized as a prodigy. Although he is best known for a collection of radical early works, throughout his life Ornstein wrote in diverse styles. His music blends lyricism, exotic atmospheres, innovative tone clusters, and dramatic rhythmic drive, greatly influenced by Debussy, Scriabin, and Eastern European Jewish traditional songs and melodies.

This emotional and melodic composition, Sonata No.2 for Cello and Piano, is a single movement masterpiece exploring the complex range and technique of the cello. The music flows with excitement from the tuneful melody of the cello to the intricate harmonic modulations in the piano, while creating sound colors evocative of Jewish music with sudden and apparent change of the musical texture.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky was a Russian composer of the Romantic period with a wide stylistic and emotional range, from light salon music to grand symphonies. In fact, he did not turn seriously to the idea of composing a piano trio for a long time. When his benefactress Nadezhda von Meck asked him for such a piece, he refused and complained, "I simply cannot endure the combination of piano with violin or cello. To my mind the timbre of these instruments will not blend ... it is torture for me to have to listen to a string trio or a sonata of any kind for piano and strings." Thus, he did not compose in the genre until the death of his dear friend, Nicolai Rubinstein, in March 1881.

Rubinstein was a famous pianist, composer and the first director of the Moscow Conservatory. He had been both Tchaikovsky's severest critic and most ardent supporter. Written between 1881 and 1882, Tchaikovsky's piano trio was premiered in 1882 at the memorial concert for the anniversary of the death of Rubinstein. The music was filled with grief and solemnity, and the composer even gave a dedicatory subtitle of this work, "A la mémoire d'un grand artiste." This piece became one of the most important examples of Tchaikovsky's chamber music.

It contains two movements that are full of grand, sweeping climaxes and rich symphonic textures. The structural plan of this work—a sonata movement followed by a set of variations in the second movement—is somewhat unusual. Tchaikovsky’s innovative structure makes a frame for the emotion of the music to grow and develop naturally, building to an incredible intensity that resonates deep to the core.

---Yun Chen

About the Artist

Pianist **Yun Chen** began her musical journey at a very young age in Taiwan, and has since performed for audiences in venues across the globe. She is currently completing a certificate program in Advanced Performance Studies at the Bard College Conservatory of Music where she studies with Frank Corliss. In March 2022 she collaborated with vocal artists and maestro Leon Botstein to prepare for performances of the Strauss opera, *Salome*, with the Bard Conservatory Orchestra. Other recent performances have taken place at the Bard College Conservatory of Music, Beattie-Powers Place in Catskill, New York, and in her native Taiwan, where she has performed in a variety of concert settings, including solo and collaborative piano recitals, chamber music, opera, and orchestral music.

Yun received her master of fine arts degree in 2020 from the Graduate Institute of Performing Arts, as well as a BFA degree from the Department of Music, at the National Taiwan Normal University. During her studies, she was awarded scholarships recognizing her musical and academic achievements. In 2017, she was admitted to the Graduate Institute in first place with a full scholarship. She was also awarded the Presidential Award in 2016, and invited to “The Paris International Summer Sessions” in 2015. She has performed in masterclasses for many distinguished artists including Russell Miller, Wei En Hsu, Ana Flavia Zuim, Heasook Rhee, Neal Stulberg, Aquiles Delle Vigne, and Arnulf von Arnim.

Nathan Francisco is pursuing a double-degree in cello performance and German studies at Bard College and Conservatory, where he studies with Peter Wiley. His musical background also includes extensive training in cello with Wesley Baldwin, viola da gamba with Martha Bishop, and historical keyboards with Judy Glass.

Violinist **Enikő Samu**, from Hungary, is in her first year of the Advanced Performance Studies Program at the Bard College Conservatory.

Zongheng Zhang graduated from the Bard College Conservatory’s double-degree program in 2021 after majoring in violin performance and psychology. He spent the past year as of a member of The Orchestra Now. This summer he will begin graduate studies in conducting at the University of Texas at Austin.