

Yandi Chen
piano chamber music

Recital in partial fulfillment of the
Doctor of Musical Arts, 2025
Student of Vivian Hornik Weilerstein

Wednesday, March 15, 2023
8:00 p.m.
Keller Room

PROGRAM

Johannes Brahms
(1833–1897)

Trio in A Minor for Clarinet, Cello and Piano,
op. 114

Allegro
Adagio
Andantino grazioso
Allegro

Samuel Zacharia, viola
Macintyre Taback, cello

Robert Schumann
(1810–1856)

Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, op. 47

Sostenuto assai – Allegro ma non troppo
Scherzo: Molto vivace
Andante cantabile
Finale: Vivace

Tong Chen, violin
Aadam Ibrahim, viola
Dilshod Narzillae, cello

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770–1827)

Piano Sonata No. 32 in C Minor, op. 111

Maestoso – Allegro con brio ed appassionato
Arietta: Adagio molto semplice e cantabile

Thank you to:

*Vivian Weilerstein, my dear teacher,
for all of your support, guidance and care throughout the past three years at NEC;*

*all my NEC colleagues and friends who play chamber music with me
and inspire me to be my better self;*

My mother for her undying support of me and my musical endeavors

Love you all.

Brahms Trio in A Minor for Clarinet, Cello and Piano, Op. 114

By March 1891, Brahms' creative impetus appeared to have faded away. He had composed nothing for more than a year; he had completed his will. But then, visiting Meiningen, the conductor of the court orchestra drew Brahms' attention to the playing of their erstwhile violinist, now director of the court theatre and principal clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld (1856-1907), who performed privately for Brahms. As the clarinetist Anton Stadler had previously inspired Mozart, so now Mühlfeld inspired Brahms. There rapidly followed four wonderful chamber pieces: this Trio, a Quintet for clarinet and strings Op. 115, and two clarinet and piano Sonatas Op. 120. Brahms himself was at the piano and Hausmann on cello for the first performance of the Trio in Berlin on 12 December 1891.

The entire piece is filled with a sense of pathos owing to the melancholy timbre of the clarinet (can be substituted by viola) as well as the dark, swirling piano accompaniment underneath. The first movement is written in a sonata-form allegro, a classical-era form Brahms uses to organize many of his works. In this movement, each instrument achieves a sense of independence as Brahms writes extended melodies for the cello, and arpeggios spread over the clarinet's melodic range. In contrast with the melancholy first movement, the second movement is more tender and expressive, featuring exchanges between the cello and clarinet where the instruments echo each other. The interplay between the cello and clarinet is an important technique Brahms uses to create balance throughout the Trio. The subsequent movement, a minuet and trio in A Major, is light-hearted and waltz-like, a musical palate-cleanser before the tumultuous finale.

Schumann Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, op. 47

Schumann's Piano Quartet dates from his "chamber music year" of 1842, which also saw the completion of the three string quartets and the piano quintet. If the latter is the more brilliant of the two works for keyboard and strings, there is at least no faulting the sweeping lyricism, deep reservoirs of emotion, and spectacular technique to be found on nearly every page of the Quartet.

The first movement opens with a noble, chorale-like theme in the strings punctuated by tolling octaves in the piano. This flows directly into the main body of the movement, a brisk *Allegro* marked by a snappy opening figure that transforms into a rather lyrical tune played by cello and violin over a chugging piano accompaniment. The second theme, a rising scale followed by a descending arpeggio, is often heard in canonic textures or in the vicinity of a choral-like *cantus firmus*. The brisk second movement channels Schumann's friend Mendelssohn's "elfin" style, here, though, darker and dourer. It is sprightly and whimsical, filled with impetuous energy that is only interrupted by the two trio sections. In the third movement, Schumann's considerable gifts as a tunesmith are fully on display. The cello opens with a gorgeous, expansive melody that is passed to each member of the quartet and heard with slightly varied accompaniments in each iteration. In the middle comes a striking, devotional passage that seems to recall late Beethoven, but does little to dispel the music's sense of yearning. The brilliant finale offers two contrasting ideas: a lively, extroverted fugato and a more ambiguous, songful tune. Neither really wins out since the blazing coda pays homage to both.

Beethoven Piano Sonata No. 32 in C Minor, op. 111

Beethoven's last sonata is surely his most poetic essay for the piano, expressing the contrasting states of human existence—earthly struggle and spiritual transcendence—framed in terms of the raw elemental building blocks of music itself. It comprises a fast-moving, contrapuntally active sonata-form movement in the minor mode matched with a slow-paced, harmonically stable set of variations in the corresponding major mode.

There is a skeletal starkness to the musical fabric of the first movement, its jagged leaps over harmonically aberrant intervals evoking a mood of worried restlessness, a mood only reinforced by frequent scurrying passages of *fugato* that seem to emphasize a disunity between the voices rather than their complementarity. Strikingly lacking in this movement is any sense of lyrical repose. The second subject appears only briefly, more in the spirit of emotional exhaustion than heartfelt fulfillment. At every turn, Beethoven seems to emphasize the unusually large space that separates the voices and the hands.

The C major chord on which the C minor first movement ends is taken up in the second movement *Arietta*, marking not only a change in mode, but a fundamental change in the construction of the musical texture. Instead of angular motivic gestures we have an eloquently simple and well-rounded melody. Instead of contrapuntal conflict we have harmonic fullness and warmth. The first three variations introduce the compositional process that will guide this melody through its successive

transformations: a gradually increasing animation in the figuration accompanying the variation theme. The third variation arrives at degree of elation that in its syncopations prefigures the arrival of jazz, before the timbre turns dark with low murmurings underpinning melodic fragments of the theme pulsing above. It is here that Beethoven begins to gaze up at the stars in textures that twinkle luminously in the highest register of the keyboard. As the theme becomes ever more cradled in the swaddling clothes of its enveloping figuration, it appears to glow, sonically, from within, by means of pearly chains of trills, until is transmuted, finally, into the essence of the divine.

Upcoming Student Recitals at NEC

all programs subject to change

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Deokyong Claire Kim, cello (MM)

Student of Laurence Lesser

Thursday, March 16, 2023 at 8:00 p.m., Keller Room

Nikki Naghavi, violin (BM)

Student of Ayano Ninomiya

Thursday, March 16, 2023 at 8:00 p.m., Pierce Hall

Madeleine Wiegers, mezzo-soprano (BM)

Student of Lisa Saffer

Thursday, March 16, 2023 at 8:00 p.m., Williams Hall

Giulia Haible, contemporary musical arts (BM)

Student of Mike Block

Friday, March 17, 2023 at 8:00 p.m., Eben Jordan

Sung Ho Yoo, piano (MM)

Student of Dang Thai Son

Friday, March 17, 2023 at 8:00 p.m., Keller Room

Marie-Elise Boyer, collaborative piano (DMA)

Student of Cameron Stowe

Wednesday, March 22, 2023 at 8:00 p.m., Brown Hall

Upcoming Student Recitals at NEC

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Hyunwoo Chun, *clarinet* (MM)

Student of Thomas Martin

Sunday, March 26, 2023 at 8:00 p.m., Brown Hall

Chiau-Rung Chen, *viola* (GD)

Student of Nicholas Cords

Monday, March 27, 2023 at 8:00 p.m., Keller Room

Ariel Fei Mo, *piano* (GD '24)

Student of Stephen Drury

Monday, March 27, 2023 at 8:00 p.m., Williams Hall

Cara Pogossian, *viola* (MM)

Student of Kim Kashkashian

Monday, March 27, 2023 at 8:00 p.m., Pierce Hall

Junghyun Ahn, *viola* (MM)

Student of Martha Katz and Mai Motobuchi

Tuesday, March 28, 2023 at 8:00 p.m., Williams Hall

Tong Chen, *violin* (GD)

Student of Donald Weilerstein

Tuesday, March 28, 2023 at 8:00 p.m., Keller Room

Mara Riley, *flute* (MM)

Student of Paula Robison

Tuesday, March 28, 2023 at 8:00 p.m., Brown Hall

Keegan Marshall-House, *jazz piano* (MM)

Student of Frank Carlberg and Jason Moran

Wednesday, March 29, 2023 at 8:00 p.m., Pierce Hall

Aleksis Martin, *clarinet* (MM)

Student of Thomas Martin

Wednesday, March 29, 2023 at 8:00 p.m., Brown Hall

Grace Yu, *piano* (BM)

Student of Bruce Brubaker

Wednesday, March 29, 2023 at 8:00 p.m., Williams Hall

Upcoming Student Recitals at NEC

—continued

Rebekah Schweitzer, *soprano* (MM)

Student of Lisa Saffer

Thursday, March 30, 2023 at 8:00 p.m., Pierce Hall

Wanchun Liang, *bass-baritone* (MM)

Student of Michael Meraw

Thursday, March 30, 2023 at 8:00 p.m., Williams Hall

Leo Weisskoff, *jazz bass* (BM)

Student of Cecil McBee, Nasheet Waits, and Joe Morris

Friday, March 31, 2023 at 8:00 p.m., Eben Jordan

Brittany Bryant, *mezzo-soprano* (BM)

Student of Karen Holvik

Saturday, April 1, 2023 at 8:00 p.m., Brown Hall

Wooyoung Kim, *mezzo-soprano* (MM)

Student of Jane Eaglen

Saturday, April 1, 2023 at 8:00 p.m., Williams Hall

Hechen Sun, *cello* (BM)

Student of Lluís Claret

Saturday, April 1, 2023 at 8:00 p.m., Burnes Hall

Yuri Ahn, *cello* (MM)

Student of Yeesun Kim

Sunday, April 2, 2023 at 12:00 noon, Pierce Hall

Yeeun Hyun, *piano* (MM)

Student of Wha Kyung Byun

Sunday, April 2, 2023 at 12:00 noon, Williams Hall

Nozomi Murayama, *violin* (MM)

Student of Nicholas Kitchen

Sunday, April 2, 2023 at 12:00 noon, Burnes Hall

Richard Vculek, *bassoon* (MM)

Student of Richard Svoboda

Sunday, April 2, 2023 at 12:00 noon, Brown Hall

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