



New England
Conservatory

Concert Program

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Welcome to NEC!

I am thrilled to share New England Conservatory's 2023-24 concert season—a celebration of the power of music to connect and inspire one another.

Whether you are seated in one of our concert halls or watching online, we hope you are uplifted by the performances of our students, faculty, and guest artists.

Above all, we thank you for your support of our students as they cultivate their artistry and contribute to the world through music.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrea Kalyn".

Andrea Kalyn
President

First Monday at Jordan Hall

Thirty-ninth Anniversary Season
Laurence Lesser, *artistic director*

Monday, March 4, 2024
7:30 p.m.
NEC's Jordan Hall

PROGRAM

Ran Blake
(b. 1935)

Noir Reflections on Charles Ives
Dedicated to DekTor Dutra and John Heiss

Ran Blake, piano

Charles Ives
(1874–1954)

Songs

In the Mornin'

West London

Down East

Watchman!

The See'r

The Things Our Fathers Loved
(and the greatest of these was Liberty)

From "Paracelsus"

The Innate

Tom Sails Away

* Laura Choi Stuart, soprano

* Tanya Blaich, piano

Intermission

Johannes Brahms
(1833–1897)

Piano Trio No. 1 in B Major, op. 8

Allegro con brio

Scherzo: Allegro molto

Adagio

Finale: Allegro

* George Li, piano

* Isabelle Ai Durrenberger, violin

Laurence Lesser, cello

* *NEC alum*

Upcoming First Monday at Jordan Hall
Spring, 2024

programs subject to change

Works by Mozart, Smetana, and Bruckner

Ayano Ninomiya, violin; Kim Kashkashian, viola; Lluís Claret, cello;

Borromeo String Quartet

HaeSun Paik, piano

Monday, April 1, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.

Works by Brahms and Chausson

Miriam Fried, David McCarroll, violin; Angela Park, cello;

Marc-André Hamelin, Ieva Jacubaviciute, piano

Terra String Quartet

Monday, May 6, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.

In the Mornin' (1929)

In the mornin' when I rise,
In the mornin' when I rise,
In the mornin' when I rise,
Give me Jesus!

Give me Jesus!
Give me Jesus!
You can have all the world, but
Give me Jesus!

'Twixt the cradle and the grave,
'Twixt the cradle and the grave,
'Twixt the cradle and the grave,
Give me Jesus!

Give me Jesus!
Give me Jesus!
You can have all the world, but
Give me Jesus!

Traditional hymn

West London (1921)

Crouch'd on the pavement, close by Belgrave Square,
A tramp I saw, ill, moody, and tongue-tied.
A babe was in her arms, and at her side
a girl; their clothes were rags, their feet were bare.
Some laboring men, whose work lay somewhere there;
Pass'd opposite; she touch'd her girl, who hied
across, and begg'd and came back satisfied.
The rich she had let pass with a frozen stare.
Thought I: Above her state this spirit towers;
She will not ask of Aliens, but of friends,
Of sharers in a common human fate.
She turns from the cold succor, which attends
the unknown little from the unknowing great,
And points us to a better time than ours.

Matthew Arnold

Down East (1919)

Songs! Visions of my homeland,
come with the strains of childhood,
Come with tunes we sang in school days
and with songs from mother's heart;
Way down east in a village by the sea,
Stands an old, red farm house
that watches o'er the lea;
All that is best in me,
lying deep in memory,
Draws my heart where I would be,
nearer to thee.
Ev'ry Sunday morning,
when the chores were almost done,
From that little parlor
sounds the old melodeon,
"Nearer my God to Thee, nearer to Thee;"
With those strains a stronger hope
comes nearer to me.

Charles Ives

Watchman! (1913)

Watchman, tell us of the night,
what its signs of promise are:
Traveler, o'er yon mountain's height,
See that glory beaming star!

Watchman, aught of joy or hope?
Traveler, yes it brings the day,
Promised day of Israel.
Dos't thou see its beauteous ray?
Traveler, see!

John Bowring

The See'r (1920)

An old man with a straw in his mouth
sat all day long before the village grocery store;
he liked to watch the funny things a-going, going,
going by!

Charles Ives

The Things Our Fathers Loved (and the greatest of these was Liberty) (1917)

I think there must be a place in the soul
all made of tunes, of things of long ago;
I hear the organ on the Main Street corner,
Aunt Sarah humming Gospels; Summer evenings,
The village cornet band, playing in the square.
The town's Red, White and Blue,
all Red, White and Blue—Now! Hear the songs!
I know not what are the words
But they sing in my soul of the things our Fathers loved.

Charles Ives

from "Paracelsus" (1921)

For God is glorified in man,
And to man's glory vowed I soul and limb.
Yet, constituted thus, and thus endowed, I failed.
I gazed on power till I grew blind —
What wonder if I saw no way to shun despair?
The power I sought seemed God's —
I learned my own deep error;
And what proportion love should hold
with power in man's right constitution;
Always preceding power.
And with much power, always, always much more love, —

Robert Browning

The Innate (1916)

Voices live in every finite being,
Often undivined, near silence.
Hear them! Hear them in you! in others!
They sense truth deep in all life;
They know the things true Pilgrims stand for.
Stand out!
Come to Him without the things the world brings;
Come to Him! As a child and as a poor man.
He had all. He gave all, all.

Charles Ives

Tom Sails Away (1917)

Scenes from my childhood are with me,
I'm in the lot behind our house upon the hill,
A spring day's sun is setting,
mother with Tom in her arms
is coming towards the garden;
the lettuce rows are showing green.
Thinner grows the smoke o'er the town,
stronger comes the breeze from the ridge,
'Tis after six, the whistles have blown,
the milk train's gone down the valley.
Daddy is coming up the hill from the mill,
We run down the lane to meet him.
But today! In freedom's cause Tom sailed away
for over there, over there!
Scenes from my childhood
are floating before my eyes.

Charles Ives

Artist biographies

Tanya Blaich is a pianist and teacher with particular sensitivity for and expertise in the song and collaborative piano repertoire. A faculty member of New England Conservatory's collaborative piano and voice departments since 2006, Blaich is co-coordinator of NEC's Liederabend Series and teaches classes dedicated to the performance of song repertoire and in language diction and expression. Blaich has been praised for her "unfailingly expressive and finely judged" playing (*The Guardian*) and her "distinct and refined palette and textures" and "unwaveringly attentive" ensemble (*Opera Today*).

Blaich has performed in concert venues and festivals throughout the United States and Europe with such recitalists as Thomas Hampson, Paula Murrihy, Klemens Sander, and Sari Gruber. Recent highlights in the 2023-24 season include song recitals at the Frankfurt Opera with Paula Murrihy and at the Kurt Weill Festival with Ute Gfrerer. Upcoming concerts this year include song recitals at the Oxford Lieder Festival and at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. Blaich and Murrihy's first album, *I Will Walk With My Love: Folk-Inspired Songs and Myths*, was released on Orchid Classics in 2020 to great acclaim.

As a guest artist, Blaich has given song recitals and master classes at universities and colleges throughout the U.S. In addition to her collaborations with singers, she has performed as a chamber music partner with members of the Colorado, Lydian, and Miro string quartets. She has also served as a coach and rehearsal pianist for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Handel and Haydn Society, and Odyssey Opera. Tanya Blaich attended the University Paris-Sorbonne and graduated from Walla Walla College in Washington. She moved to Vienna to pursue her passion for the German Lied repertoire, earning a diploma in performance from the Vienna Conservatory in vocal accompaniment and chamber music. She subsequently earned both her M.M. and D.M.A. from New England Conservatory.

In a career that spans nearly six decades, pianist **Ran Blake** has created a unique niche as a composer, performing artist, and educator. With a characteristic mix of spontaneous solos, modern classical tonalities, the great American blues and gospel traditions, and themes from classic Film Noir, Ran's singular sound has earned a dedicated following all over the world. His dual musical legacy includes nearly 50 albums on some of the world's finest jazz labels, as well nearly five decades as a groundbreaking educator at New England Conservatory.

Blake discovered the dark, image-laden and complex character-driven films that would so influence his music when he first saw Robert Siodmak's *The Spiral Staircase* at age 11. "There were post-World War II musical nuances that, if occasionally banal and as clichéd as yesterday's soap operas, were often so eerie, haunting and unforgettable," Ran would later write. After repeated viewings over three weeks, he recalls how "plots, scenes, and melodic and harmonic surfaces intermingled, obtruding into my daily life as well as my dreams."

Long before the invention of virtual reality, Blake began mentally placing

himself inside the films and real-life scenarios that inspired his original compositions like *Spiral Staircase*, *Memphis* and *The Short Life of Barbara Monk*. The influence of the Pentecostal church music he discovered as a teenager growing up in Suffield, Connecticut, combined with his musical immersion in what he terms “a Film Noir world,” laid the groundwork for his earliest musical style. .

A year after Gunther Schuller became President of Boston’s New England Conservatory in 1967, he created the first department in the U.S. to offer a degree in jazz studies. Ran was invited to join other remarkable artists on the faculty Schuller was assembling, including George Russell, Carl Atkins, Jaki Byard, Jimmy Giuffre, and others. In 1973, Ran became the first chair of the Third Stream Department, which he co-founded with Schuller at the school. The department was renamed the Contemporary Improvisation Department, to acknowledge its evolution beyond Jazz and Classical to embrace the incredibly rich and varied World Music traditions. It is now known as Contemporary Musical Arts.

While Ran Blake’s teaching career has been a major part of his musical legacy, his work as a composer and performer is the main source of his renown as a wholly individual artist—and the basis of his recognition as MacArthur “Genius” Fellow in 1988. Over the years he has performed in 48 of the 50 United States, throughout Europe and Scandinavia, collaborating and recording with such artists as George Russell, Steve Lacy, Rufus Reid, Jaki Byard, Anthony Braxton, Andrew Hill, Jimmy Giuffre, Houston Person, Ricky Ford, and Danilo Perez. His nearly 50 recordings have built a huge following around the world. Many of his most acclaimed recordings are tributes to artists like Monk, Sarah Vaughn, Horace Silver, George Gershwin, and Duke Ellington. Ran’s most recent recordings are *Ghost Tones: Portraits of George Russell* (A-Side, 2015); *Live at the Kitano w/Sara Serpa* (Sunnyside, 2015); *Down Here Below: A Tribute to Abbey Lincoln with Christine Correa* (RedPiano, 2015); *Chabrol Noir: A Tribute to Claude Chabrol with Ricky Ford* (Impulse!, 2016); *Town and Country with Dominique Eade* (Sunnyside, 2017); *Streaming with Christine Correa* (RedPiano, 2018); and *The Newest Sound You Never Heard: European Recordings 1966-67* (A-Side, 2019).

Ran Blake continues to evolve his noir language on the piano and remains as active as ever with full-time teaching, recordings, touring, and writing a new book, *Storyboarding Noir: Ran Blake on Film*. A recent *Downbeat* review said, “Ran Blake is so hip it hurts ... a pianist who can make you laugh at his dry humor one second and wring a tear the next.” In the words of his fellow MacArthur Grant recipient and Kennedy Center Artistic Director for Jazz, Jason Moran: “It’s this thunder-crack of sound that explodes from the instrument once he puts his hands on it. Ran’s unlike anything else that exists. I hope musicians hear him and ask themselves, ‘Shouldn’t we be taking more chances?’

Uniquely communicative, American violinist **Isabelle Ai Durrenberger** delivers performances of deeply striking and sincere artistry. Gaining national recognition for her skillful and passionate chamber musicianship, Isabelle’s recent engagements

include appearances with Boston Chamber Music Society, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, Marlboro Music Festival, and Grammy-nominated chamber orchestra A Far Cry. Based in New York City, she is a current fellow of Carnegie Hall's renowned Ensemble Connect program which develops the next generation of teaching artists and musical leaders through performance, community engagement, and partnerships with NYC public schools.

Under the mentorship of Soovin Kim and Donald Weilerstein, Isabelle completed her graduate studies in Boston at the New England Conservatory. While growing up in Columbus, Ohio, she was mentored by Jaime Laredo throughout her high school and undergraduate studies at the Cleveland Institute of Music.

Isabelle has been serving on the violin faculty at the New England Conservatory Preparatory School since the fall of 2022, and her high school students have been admitted to top national conservatories such as Juilliard, New England Conservatory of Music, and Cleveland Institute of Music.

National accolades for Isabelle's playing include the 2022 Borromeo String Quartet Guest Artist Award, 2018 Irving M. Klein Competition Bronze Medal, Tuesday Musical First Prize Scholarship for Performance, First Prize in Cleveland Institute of Music Concerto Competition, and being named Artist Fellow of Jennifer Koh's 2021 "Alone Together" Seminar. A frequent competitor in international competitions, Isabelle was most recently a semifinalist of the 2022 International Violin Competition of Indianapolis and 2021 Young Concert Artists Audition. Isabelle has performed as soloist with many American orchestras including the Columbus Symphony, Asheville Symphony, and Lakeside Symphony Orchestra among others.

Isabelle performs on a 2020 Sam Zygmuntowicz violin generously loaned to her by a private patron in New York City. In her free time, Isabelle enjoys running, baking, and reading classic literature.

Laurence Lesser (President Emeritus; Walter W. Naumburg Chair in Music; Violoncello, Chamber Music; Artistic Director, "First Monday at Jordan Hall") was a top prize winner in the 1966 Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow and a guest performer in the historic Heifetz-Piatigorsky concerts and recordings. In 1976 he gave the premiere of Menotti's *Fantasia* (written for him under a Ford Foundation grant) with the New Japan Philharmonic under Seiji Ozawa; in 1991, he performed the New England premiere with the NEC Symphony conducted by Mstislav Rostropovich. He has been a soloist with the BSO, the London Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and other major orchestras. He has appeared at the Casals, Spoleto, Marlboro, Charleston, Ravinia, Music@Menlo, and Santa Fe festivals as well as London's South Bank Summer Music Festival. In 2005, Lesser was named a "Chevalier du Violoncelle" by the Eva Janzer Memorial Cello Center at Indiana University, awarded for distinguished achievements and contributions to the world of cello playing and teaching.

In 2010, Bridge Records released recordings of the complete Beethoven sonatas for cello and piano with Lesser and HaeSun Paik, which have been highly praised by

the press. In the spring of 2011, Mr. Lesser performed the complete Bach Cello Suites in Jordan Hall and recorded them in August, 2015, also in Jordan Hall. They are now available through his website laurencelesser.com. His article about his transcription for cello of the lute version of Bach Suite V appeared in the May 2018 issue of *Strad Magazine*, and in the current March 2024 issue of *Strad Magazine* you will find a long article titled, "The making of a cellist" - discussing the teachers he has worked with over many years and other formative influences.

Laurence Lesser was NEC president from 1983-1996, during which time he oversaw the restoration of Jordan Hall in 1995. He plays a cello made by Hieronymus Amati in 1622.

Praised by the *Washington Post* for combining "staggering technical prowess, a sense of command and depth of expression," pianist **George Li** possesses an effortless grace, poised authority, and brilliant virtuosity far beyond his years. Since winning the Silver Medal at the 2015 International Tchaikovsky Competition, Li has rapidly established a major international reputation and performs regularly with some of the world's leading orchestras and conductors, such as Dudamel, Gaffigan, Gergiev, Gimeno, Honeck, Orozco-Estrada, Petrenko, Robertson, Slatkin, Temirkanov, Tilson Thomas, Long Yu, and Xian Zhang.

Li's 2023-24 season began with a recital at the Grand Teton Music Festival followed by his debut with the Aula Simfonia in Jakarta, Indonesia and conductor Jahja Ling. He embarks on an extensive tour in China including recital and concerto performances in Kunming, Beijing, and Shanghai. In Europe, Li presents recital programs in Viersen, Baden, Elmau, and Stuttgart, and he debuts with the Prague Philharmonia in Prague and Ljubljana. US performances include engagements with the Cincinnati and Milwaukee Symphonies, Florida Orchestra, Oklahoma City Philharmonic, and Chicago Sinfonietta; and recitals across the country from California to Florida. A committed collaborator, George returns to the ECHO series in El Cajon, CA with the Dover Quartet and San Francisco's Davies Symphony Hall with violinist Stella Chen.

He is an exclusive Warner Classics recording artist, with his debut recital album released in October 2017 which was recorded live from the Mariinsky. His second recording for the label features Liszt solo works and Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No.1, which was recorded live with Vasily Petrenko and the London Philharmonic and was released in October 2019. His third album with the label, which will include solo pieces by Schumann, Ravel and Stravinsky, is scheduled to be released in summer of 2024.

Li began his studies at age 4, and since the age of 12 has studied with Wha Kyung Byun. He is an NEC alumnus, graduating in 2019 with a Master in Music degree, and 2022 with an Artist Diploma. He is eternally grateful to both Wha Kyung Byun and Russell Sherman for leading him into the garden of music and life, and especially for the principles of charity and compassion.

Hailed as "a lyric soprano of ravishing quality" by the Boston Globe, **Laura Choi**

Stuart appears this season as a soloist in Haydn's *Creation*, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, Forrester's *Requiem for the Living* and Canteloube's *Chants d'Auvergne*. Recital appearances this season include songs of Gustav Holst and Barber's *Knoxville, Summer of 1915*. She returns to Washington National Cathedral in Handel's *Messiah*.

Recent season highlights include *Elijah* with Baltimore Choral Arts, Vaughan Williams *Dona Nobis Pacem* with Washington Master Chorale, Poulenc *Gloria*, Mendelssohn *Lobgesang*, Mozart *Requiem*, Bach *Christmas Oratorio* and the Monteverdi *Vespers*, as well as regular appearances with Washington Bach Consort, Bach Vocal Artists of Winter Park, and Seraphic Fire.

In opera, she has appeared on the mainstage with Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Boston, Annapolis Opera, Lake George Opera, the In Series, and Opera North in roles including Musetta, Adina, Gilda, Pamina, and Frasquita, and in premieres of new American works with Washington National Opera as part of the American Opera Initiative.

Laura was honored for art song performance at the National Association of Teachers of Singing Artist Awards and the Art Song Discovery Series for the Vocal Arts Society. She is a passionate teacher, and serves as Head of Vocal Studies at Washington National Cathedral and as a visiting clinician at Bridgewater University, Towson University, the Maryland AGO, and many choirs in the DC region. She shares clear (fun) voice education for choral singers at TheWeeklyWarmUp.com. She received her training at The Santa Fe Opera Apprentice Program for Singers, Opera North, and Berkshire Opera, as well as New England Conservatory (Presidential Scholar) and Dartmouth College (summa cum laude).

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and photography and audio or video recording are prohibited.

Assistive listening devices are available for all Jordan Hall concerts;
contact the head usher or house manager on duty or inquire at the Coat Room.

Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of management.

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