

Concert Program

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Welcome to NEC!

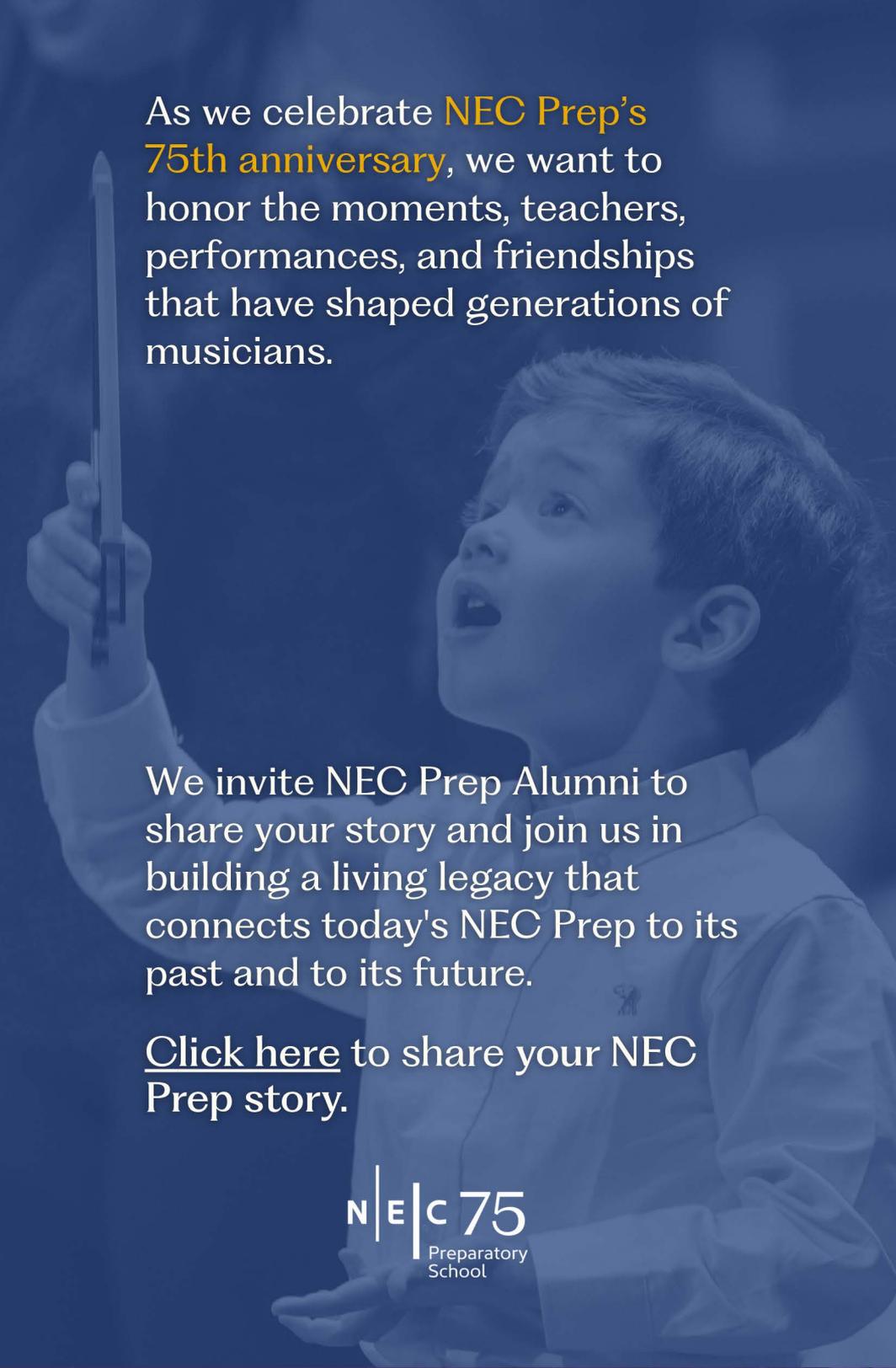
I am thrilled to welcome you to New England Conservatory's 2025–26 concert season — a celebration of the power that music has to inspire and connect us to one another.

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

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long tail.

Andrea Kalyn
President



As we celebrate **NEC Prep's 75th anniversary**, we want to honor the moments, teachers, performances, and friendships that have shaped generations of musicians.

We invite NEC Prep Alumni to share your story and join us in building a living legacy that connects today's NEC Prep to its past and to its future.

[Click here](#) to share your NEC Prep story.



**NEC Prep 75th Anniversary
Piano Department Event**

**With Special Guests
Wha-Kyung Byun and George Li**

Saturday, November 15, 2025

12:00 PM

New England Conservatory - Williams Hall

PROGRAM

A Tribute to NEC Prep Distinguished Former Chairs

Video Postcards

Featuring distinguished NEC Prep alumni

Gloria Chien

Evren Ozel

HaeSun Paik

Conversation with Wha-Kyung Byun and George Li

Hitomi Koyama, moderator

Masterclass with Wha-Kyung Byun

Sonata in F Major, K. 533

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

I. Allegro

Victoria Han

Sonata No. 5, Op. 53

Alexander Scriabin (1872–1915)

Ian Lin

BIOGRAPHIES

Wha Kyung Byun was born and educated in Korea, where she won several major competitions and was chosen as one of the most talented young artists in the country. After her debut recital at the age of 15, she appeared as soloist with major orchestras and performed throughout her homeland. She graduated from Seoul National University and was awarded the Presidential Gold Medal. Since coming to the United States, Byun studied piano at New England Conservatory with Russell Sherman and chamber music with Rudolf Kolisch. Her playing has been described by the *Boston Globe* as "rapturous" and "poetic."

Since 1979 she has taught at New England Conservatory and dedicated herself to helping numerous students in their development as both musicians and human beings.

She is widely renowned as one of the most successful teachers in America. Over the years, her students have been prize winners in major national and international competitions. Many of Wha Kyung Byun's students are recipients of prestigious awards, including the Gilmore and Avery Fisher Career Grant Awards, among others.

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.

Recent concerto highlights include performances with the Los Angeles, New York, London, Rotterdam, Oslo, St. Petersburg, and Buffalo Philharmonics; the San Francisco, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Dallas, Tokyo, Frankfurt Radio, Sydney, Nashville, New Jersey, New World, North Carolina, Pacific, Valencia, Montreal, and Baltimore Symphonies; as well as the Philharmonia, DSO Berlin, Orchestre National de Lyon, and Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège in Belgium. His eight-concert tour of Germany with the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra included performances at the Berlin Philharmonie, Philharmonie am Gasteig Munich, and the Stuttgart Liederhalle. His collaboration with the Mariinsky Orchestra included performances at the Paris Philharmonie, Luxembourg Philharmonie, New York's Brooklyn Academy of Music, Graffnegg Festival, and in various venues throughout Russia.

In recital, Li has previously performed at venues including Carnegie Hall, Davies Hall in San Francisco, Symphony Center in Chicago, the Mariinsky Theatre, Elbphilharmonie, Munich's Gasteig, the Louvre, Seoul Arts Center, Tokyo's Asahi Hall and Musashino Hall, NCPA Beijing, Shanghai's Poly Theater, and Amici della Musica Firenze, as well as appearances at major festivals, including the Edinburgh International Festival, Verbier Festival, Ravinia Festival, Festival de Pâques in Aix-en-Provence, and the Montreux Festival. An active chamber musician, Li has performed alongside Benjamin Beilman, Noah Bendix-Balgley, James Ehnes, Daniel Hope, Sheku Kanneh-Mason, and Kian Soltani.

Li 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 released in October 2019. His third album with the label, which will include solo pieces by Schumann, Ravel, and Stravinsky, released in the spring of 2024.

Li gave his first public performance at Boston's Steinway Hall at the age of ten, and in 2011 performed for President Obama at the White House in an evening honoring Chancellor Angela Merkel. Among Li's many prizes, he was the recipient of the 2016 Avery Fisher Career Grant, a recipient of the 2012 Gilmore Young Artist Award, and the First Prize winner of the 2010 Young Concert Artists International Auditions. George began his piano studies at age 4 with Dorothy Shi, before continuing with Wha Kyung Byun at New England Conservatory beginning at age 12. In 2019, he completed the Harvard/New England Conservatory dual degree program, with a Bachelor's degree in English Literature and a Master's degree in Music. He subsequently graduated with an Artist Diploma at New England Conservatory in 2022. When not playing piano, George is an avid reader and photographer, as well as a sports fanatic.

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From student scholarships and faculty support to exceptional student resources and learning opportunities, your gift makes the unparalleled NEC experience possible.

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Food and drink are not allowed in the concert hall, 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.

Stay connected





How can **you** keep the music playing?

Learn more at necmusic.edu/givenow

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A woman in a graduation gown and a starburst headpiece, with her arms raised in celebration, is the central figure of the image. The background is a purple-tinted photograph of a graduation ceremony.

We thank our generous donors, who remain committed to elevating the NEC experience and who make it possible for our students to continue their artistic pursuits. Every gift to **The NEC Fund** supports the pillars of an NEC education — scholarship, community engagement, and a world-renowned faculty.

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