

SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE

at the University Center for the Arts

Guest Artist Concert:

YI-JIA SUSANNE HOU AND BRYAN WALLICK

APRIL 1, 2025 | 7:30 P.M.

ORGAN RECITAL HALL



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YI-JIA SUSANNE HOU AND BRYAN WALLICK RECITAL PROGRAM
APRIL 1, 2025 | 7:30 P.M. | ORGAN RECITAL HALL

Brahms:

Sonata Satz (Scherzo) WoO 2

Amy Beach:

Romance Op. 23

Paganini:

Selection of Caprices Op. 1

INTERMISSION

Schubert:

Fantasy in C major D. 934

Saint Saëns:

Introduction et Rondo Capriccioso Op. 28

YI-JIA SUSANNE HOU

Born to a musical family, Chinese-Canadian violinist Yi-Jia Susanne Hou rose to fame on the international concert scene when she unanimously won three prestigious international violin competitions in France, Italy, and Spain (Long-Thibaud, Lipizer, Sarasate) representing both Canada and China.

Since then, Susanne Hou has performed as a soloist with major orchestras in more than 50 countries including London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio-France, SWR Stuttgart, WDR Cologne as well as Toronto Symphony, Vancouver Symphony, National Arts Centre Orchestra, Singapore Symphony, Tokyo Philharmonic and NHK. She has collaborated with such renowned musicians as Mstislav Rostropovich, Pinchas Zukerman, Alan Gilbert, Andreas Delfs, Marek Janowski, Alexander Shelley and Krzysztof Urbański among others.

In 2013, Susanne Hou recorded the Beethoven Violin Concerto with the London Symphony Orchestra playing an outstanding 1735 ex-Fritz Kreisler Mary Portman Guarneri Del Gesu Violin as a tribute to its unique history. In 2016 she performed and recorded the *Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and conductor John Nelson at Cadogan Hall, a work she successfully toured within Canada, China and Taiwan.

Her recent and future engagements include a German tour with Sinfonietta Cracovia, a return to Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, an extensive recital and concert tour to South Africa working with Cape, Johannesburg and Kwazulu Natal Philharmonic Orchestras as well as a recital at Flaneries Musicales de Reims and a return to the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra.

Susanne Hou is a passionate advocate for music education. She consistently engages in creative projects involving early classical music coaching as well as mentoring aspiring young artists. Launched in 2017 her education initiative called “3-degrees” began in Brazil where Susanne Hou worked with inspired musical students from an underprivileged background. Subsequently, she partnered with DakApp bringing young artists from The Juilliard School in New York, Royal College of Music in London, Beijing Central Conservatory, and the Paris Conservatoire to London for the filming of an orchestral masterclass which is now available online via DakApp to students all over the world.

BRYAN WALLICK

Bryan Wallick is gaining recognition as one of the great American virtuoso pianists of his generation. Gold medalist of the 1997 Vladimir Horowitz International Piano Competition in Kiev, he has performed throughout the United States, Europe, and Africa.

Mr. Wallick made his New York recital debut in 1998 at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall and made his Wigmore Hall recital debut in London in 2003. He has also performed at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall with the London Sinfonietta, the St. Martin-in-the-Fields Church, and will perform a recital at the new Bechstein Hall this March 2025.

In recent seasons, Mr. Wallick has performed with the Arizona Musicfest Orchestra, Boise Philharmonic, Boulder Symphony, Brevard Symphony, Cape Town Philharmonic, Cincinnati Pops, Evansville Philharmonic, Fort Collins Symphony, Illinois Philharmonic, Johannesburg Philharmonic, Kentucky Symphony, Kwa-Zulu Natal Philharmonic, Memphis Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, Portland Symphony, Winston-Salem Symphony, Western Piedmont Symphony, Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra; and collaborated with conductors Erich Kunzel, Marvin Hamlisch, Robert Moody, Daniel Raiskin, Bernhard Gueller, Adrian Prabava, Daniel Boico, Arjen Tien, Yasuo Shinozaki, Andrew Sewell, Vladimir Verbitsky, Victor Yampolsky, Josep Vicent, Leslie Dunner, Alfred Savia, Christopher Confessore, Matthew Troy, and Wes Kenney among others. Mr. Wallick has performed recitals at the Chateau Differdange in Luxembourg, on the Tivoli Artists Series in Copenhagen, Ravinia's Rising Star Series, Grand Teton Music Festival, Xavier Piano Series (Cincinnati), Scottsdale Center's Virginia Piper Series, Sanibel Island Music Festival, Tri-C Classical Series at the Cleveland Museum of Art, and the Classics in the Atrium Series in the British Virgin Islands. In March 2002, Mr. Wallick played two solo performances at Ledreborg Palace for HRH Princess Marie Gabrielle Luxembourg, and HRH Prince Philip Bourbon de Parme.

Bryan Wallick is an avid chamber musician and has performed with violinists Nikita Boriso-Glebsky, Rachel Lee Priday, Yi-Jia Susanne Hou, Miriam Contzen, Sergei Malov, and cellists Zuill Bailey, Alexander Buzlov, Alexander Ramm, and Wolfgang Emmanuel Schmidt. He has recently joined the Mendelssohn Trio which is in residence at Colorado State University and most recently performed with them on a European tour in September 2022 visiting Switzerland, Austria and Germany. In 2015 he became Artistic Director of Schalk Visser Concert Promotions which hosts many international musicians who perform concert tours throughout South Africa. During the COVID-19 period he recorded the Beethoven Triple Concerto Op. 56 (Trio Version) with violinist Frank Stadler (Austria) and Peter Martens (South Africa) in an inter-continental virtual collaboration across three continents which won

the KykNet Fiesta Award for Best Achievement in Classical Music for South Africa 2020. Mr. Wallick is also actively involved in organizing the International Keyboard Odysiad and Summer Festival (IKOF) in Colorado where he regularly performs, lectures and teaches, and is also on the faculty for the Rocky Ridge Summer Festival in Estes Park, Colorado.

His most recent engagements include appearances with the Brevard Symphony, Boulder Symphony, Cape Town Philharmonic, Fort Collins Symphony, Johannesburg Philharmonic, Kwa-Zulu Natal Philharmonic, Memphis Symphony Orchestra, and Western Piedmont Symphony. He has performed his latest recital project *Virtuosic Fugue* for the Grand Teton Music Festival, University of Texas (El Paso), Las Cruces, New Mexico, Scottsdale Center in Arizona, Ravinia Festival, Xavier Piano Series, Tri-C Classical Series at the Cleveland Museum of Art, and throughout South Africa. *Virtuosic Fugue (Vol. 1)* was recorded for Navona Records and released in July 2023. He made chamber appearances with cellist Zuill Bailey for Chamber Music Detroit and the Library of Congress, performed with violinist Rachel Lee Priday at the University of Washington and Colorado State's Classical Convergence series, and performed at the Chintimini Summer Music Festival in Oregon.

Bryan Wallick has performed on Chicago's WFMT Fazioli Series and "Live on WFMT," on BBC's radio show "In Tune," National Ukrainian Television and Radio, on Danish National Radio, on Colorado Public Radio and on NPR's "Performance Today." He was given a grant in 2006 by the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts to explore his synesthetic realities in a multimedia project that allows the audience to see the colors he experiences while performing. Synesthesia is the ability to experience two or more sensory experiences with one stimulus. Bryan Wallick sees colors with each musical pitch and has created a computer program that projects images of his colored visions to the audience.

Mr. Wallick studied with Jerome Lowenthal in New York City where he was the first Juilliard School graduate to receive both an undergraduate Honors Diploma (2000) and an accelerated master's Degree (2001). He continued his studies with Christopher Elton in London at the Royal Academy of Music where he was the recipient of the Associated Board International Scholarship, receiving a Post-graduate Diploma with Distinction. He previously studied with Eugene and Elisabeth Pridonoff from the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music. Mr. Wallick has recently been appointed as Assistant-Professor of Piano at Colorado State University where he lives with his wife and three children. George Plimpton's feature article on Bryan Wallick appeared in the March 2002 edition of *Contents* magazine.

PROGRAM NOTES

Brahms Sonatensatz WoO 2

If it were necessary for composers to play all the instruments for which they write, the musical literature would be very scant indeed. Fortunately, it is not. In the case of Brahms, there is no evidence that he ever played the violin. His understanding of the violin came about in a very personal, almost hands-on way. When he was only 17, he went on the road as accompanist to the Hungarian violinist Eduard Reményi. At the elbow of this brilliant fiddler, young Johannes learned much about the instrument's technique and, as a bonus, came to know and love the Hungarian music Reményi always included on his programs.

But Brahms' debt to Reményi does not stop there, for it was he who introduced the young composer to Joseph Joachim, who, although only two years older than Brahms, was, at age 22 when they met, already a famous artist. A friendship developed immediately between the two musicians, a friendship which, except for a brief period, was deep and abiding.

The personal and musical value of Joachim's friendship to Brahms is impossible to measure. It was Joachim who godfathered Brahms' Violin Concerto and whose spirit hovers over Brahms' three Violin Sonatas, the Double Concerto, and the Scherzo on tonight's program.

The Scherzo is now something of an orphan, although it was intended to be the second movement of a collaborative sonata, conceived as a welcoming gift for Joachim in Düsseldorf, with a first movement written by Albert Dietrich, the third and fourth by Robert Schumann. The recipient was asked to guess the author of each movement, which he did quite easily. [The F.A.E. of the title are the letters of Joachim's maxim, *Frei, aber einsam* (Free, but lonely), and are used as notes of a motif of the sonata.]

Brahms' contribution could hardly be mistaken – the composer's youthful (age 20) footprints are evident: the taut energy, beginning with the violin's Beethovenesque three-short-and-a-long; the syncopations and cross-rhythms; the intermezzo-like lyricism of a trio that can't resist brandishing some main section materials for the sake of unity; and a closing grandeur which seems to define the "young eagle's" (Schumann's appellation) soaring aspirations and his extravagant regard for Joachim.

– Orrin Howard

Amy Beach Romance Op. 23

Amy Beach's Romance for Violin and Piano came relatively early in her career. It was composed in 1893 and dedicated to the then famous American violinist Maud Powell. Beach and Powell premiered the work in the year that it was composed at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. It is in three sections with the melodies shared by both players.

Amy Beach (1867-1944) née Cheney was born in Henniker, New Hampshire. She studied piano with several at the time well-known piano teachers, including Ernst Perabo and Kal Baermann, but with regard to composition she was almost entirely self-taught. She made her concert debut at the age of 16. Two years later, she married a physician 24 years her senior, Dr. Henry Harris Aubrey Beach. During her lifetime, she was known neither by her maiden name nor her own given name but by the moniker "Mrs. H.H.A. Beach." That this was so, one must remember that this was the practice at the time and even the most celebrated actresses in Britain and America were known by their husband's names. Hence, all of her compositions appeared under the name of Mrs. H.H.A. Beach and it is only recently in more egalitarian times that she has finally become known under her own name, Amy Beach. For social propriety's sake, her husband, as a member of Boston's upper crust, insisted that she limit her concert performances to one a year. It was only after his death in 1910 that she embarked on a concert tour of both Europe and America. She wrote in most genres and was the first American woman to write a symphonic work. Ultimately, she was considered one of America's leading composers and the only female composer to be ranked alongside of Arthur Foote, George Chadwick, Edward MacDowell, and Horatio Parker. Her writing is in a late Romantic idiom, showing the influence of Brahms and and Cesar Franck.

Paganini Caprices Op. 1

The most astounding of Paganini's compositions are his Twenty-Four Caprices for Solo Violin, which even today mark the outer limits of traditional violin technique. Their date of composition is uncertain. Paganini himself claimed that he wrote them while still a teenager studying in Parma with Ferdinando Paër, the Italian composer who served for a time as Napoleon's *maître de chapelle* and composed an opera titled *Leonora* in 1804 on the identical subject that Beethoven treated in his only opera a year later. Current opinion on the provenance of the caprices places their creation at various times between about 1805 and shortly before their publication in 1820 by Ricordi in Milan. They were the only violin music Paganini published during his lifetime (the other four opus numbers he allowed to be issued

included a dozen sonatas for violin and guitar and fifteen quartets for guitar, violin, viola, and cello), and he made them available principally to prove that no one else could play them. The two dozen numbers, though all united by their breathtaking array of double-stops, left-hand pizzicati, trills, cross-string arpeggios, and whirlwind scales, cover a surprisingly wide range of musical styles and moods.

— Richard E Roda

Schubert Fantasy in C for Violin and Piano D. 934

The list of instrumental masterworks composed by Franz Schubert in his short life – he was not yet 32 when the end came, even younger than Mozart, who died at age 35 – is remarkable, especially considering his reputation as perhaps the greatest composer of songs. The “mature” works include string quartets, piano sonatas, trios, and masterpieces for piano duo, as well as symphonies.

The genre of the violin sonata did not figure significantly in his catalog, but one work for the combination of violin and piano stands above the others for several reasons. The late works of Schubert, if that’s the right term for music composed at age 30 or 31, find him exploring new harmonic, sonic, and emotional territory, and that is certainly true of the Fantasy (D. 934) for violin and piano.

The very title is one we find in just a few of Schubert’s compositions, such as the “Wanderer” Fantasy (D. 760) for solo piano and the Fantasy in F minor (D. 940) for piano four-hands. As with D. 760, Schubert employs thematic material from one of his many songs, in this case “Sei mir gegrüsst!” (D. 741). The text is by Friedrich Rückert, best known as the source of Mahler’s *Kindertotenlieder* and the Five Rückert Songs, one of which is the extraordinary “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen” (I am lost to the world). Although the Schubert setting whose tune is used in the middle section of this Fantasy may seem sentimental and gushing (“Be greeted by me; be kissed by me...”), Schubert authority Graham Johnson is convinced the song is more epic and tragic.

There is much more to the chamber work, which takes nearly half an hour to perform. From the opening, hushed and almost ghostly in its tremolando way, Schubert moves into lyrical and virtuosic territory by turns, fully justifying the work’s designation as a Fantasy.

Saint Saëns: Introduction et Rondo Capriccioso Op. 28

It is no wonder that Camille Saint-Saëns found the medium of the solo concerto and solo showpiece so congenial: his prodigious musical talent was made up in large part of the kind of extroversion and dazzle upon which such works depend. His gift for melodies and the elegant line, his flair for orchestration - in total, his superior craftsmanship - were ideally suited to music in which depth was not demanded.

The present work, written in 1863 and dedicated to the great Spanish violinist, Pablo de Sarasate, operates appealingly on two of the composer's ideal levels: in the slow Introduction, the violin sings a lovely, plaintive melody whose lack of passion tells much about Saint-Saëns' cool, elegant expressiveness; in the Rondo Capriccioso, dash, virtuosity, and songfulness combine in his most effective manner. With the present piece as an example, one readily admits that Saint-Saëns did indeed understand the art of music.

— Orrin Howard

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