



Old First Concerts

presents

Samantha Cho
piano

Sunday, August 15, 2021 at 4 PM
Old First Church
1751 Sacramento St. at Van Ness Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94109
(415) 474-1608 www.oldfirstconcerts.org

ABOUT OLD FIRST CONCERTS

- Great venue for music with beautiful acoustics and amazing Steinway concert grand piano.
- Primarily local emerging and mid-career professional musicians presenting innovative programs.
- Every concert offers new insights and virtuosic performances.
- Complimentary refreshments served at intermission or after the concert.
- An independent 501(c)3 non-profit organization devoted to presenting music at affordable prices, especially for low-income seniors and students.
- Solo, chamber music, and world music concerts year-round since 1970.

DONATING TO OLD FIRST CONCERTS

Ticket sales provide about 38 percent of our operating revenue each year. In addition, we rely on support from private foundations and Grants for the Arts from the city of San Francisco. Our generous individual donors complete the picture. We invite you to join us in our mission to connect audiences and local musicians and build up the classical music and world music scene in San Francisco. Donations are tax-deductible and donating on our website is easy and secure: www.oldfirstconcerts.org/give/, or checks can be mailed to: Old First Concerts, 1751 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, CA 94109. Thank you!

COVID-19 RESPONSE: RETURNING TO THE MUSIC

Old First Concerts is committed to the health and safety of our audiences, performers and staff. We look forward to having audiences back in our space when it is safe to do so. In the meantime, we are happy to be able to continue presenting artists of the highest caliber to our audience in the Bay Area—and beyond—via livestreamed events. We are following city guidelines and safety protocols to help ensure the safest possible environment for our performers and staff.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Following us on **Facebook** is a great way to keep informed about the latest concert information. While you are there, don't forget to **share** events with your friends and hit the "Like" button liberally. [facebook.com/oldfirstconcerts/](https://www.facebook.com/oldfirstconcerts/)

You can also find us on **Instagram** [@oldfirstconcerts](https://www.instagram.com/oldfirstconcerts) with information about upcoming events plus photos and videos from our concerts.

PROGRAM

Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757)

Sonata in C major, K. 132

Sonata in D minor, K. 1

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Rondo in A minor, K. 511

Sonata in B-flat major, K. 570

Allegro

Adagio

Allegretto

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Drei Intermezzi, Op. 117

Sofia Gubaidulina (b. 1931)

Toccata-Troncata

Invention

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Although Italian composer **Domenico Scarlatti** (1685–1757) is classified as a Baroque composer chronologically—sharing the same birth year as the important Baroque composers J. S. Bach and Handel—his music expresses elements of the Classical style. Scarlatti is primarily known today for his prolific contribution to the keyboard sonata literature, having written 555 keyboard sonatas during his lifetime! Originally intended to be played on the harpsichord, clavichord or fortepiano, the opening piece to this afternoon’s program (*Sonata in C major, K. 132*) is a wonderful example of Scarlatti’s influence on the development of the Classical style. In ternary ABA form, this sonata is highly ornamented in Baroque style but the tone color throughout is light and transparent. The second piece in today’s program (*Sonata in D minor, K. 1*) is more virtuosic and technically challenging. Both works pair beautifully to showcase Scarlatti’s contribution to the keyboard sonata as well as his influence on raising the virtuosic and expressive standards for keyboard performance.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791), considered to be one of the greatest classical composers, had the remarkable gift of writing music at a quick pace: despite his early death at the age of thirty five, he left to the

world more than 600 compositions in every genre available during his time, such as the symphony, concerto, opera, instrumental solo works, chamber music and chorale. The *Rondo in A minor, K. 511* was published in 1787 during an especially prolific time during Mozart's career: having successfully premiered his opera *The Marriage of Figaro* in Prague and about to produce his next great opera *Don Giovanni*. The *Sonata in B-flat major, K. 570* is dated two years later in 1789. Both solo piano works are highly cantabile and beautiful, expressing Mozart's love and genius for operatic music.

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) was a German composer from the Romantic Period. His works include four symphonies, two piano concertos, lieder, a violin concerto and a variety of chamber music genres. During the beginning of Brahms' career, Robert Schumann—another important Romantic composer—publicly expressed great expectations for Brahms as a young composer. For the rest of Brahms' life, he strove to live up to Schumann's expectations. The *Drei Intermezzi, Op. 117* in today's program are a set of three intermezzi written for solo piano written towards Brahms' later years. The sound throughout communicates tender longing and sadness. To set the tone for the first intermezzo in E-flat major, Brahms included a preface excerpted from an old Scottish Ballad *Lady Anne Bothwell's Lament*:

Schlaf sanft, mein Kind, schlaf sanft und schön!

Mich dauert's sehr, dich weinen sehn.

After Brahms finished writing this set, he described the *Drei Intermezzi* as "three lullabies to my sorrow."

Sofia Gubaidulina (b. 1931) is an important Russian female composer from the second half of the 20th century. Born in Christopol, a small town in the Tatar Republic of the USSR, Gubaidulina's childhood experience is unusual and inspiring: she was profoundly influenced by Judaism and as a young child, she hid her spiritual needs from even her own parents as the Russian USSR strictly forbade religious passion. Her early experience of keeping her spiritual thoughts private would later submerge powerfully in her music as she continually strove to combine the realms of sound and spirituality into one union. Gubaidulina's aesthetic is intensely spiritual: music for her became an escape from the oppressive atmosphere in Soviet Russia. Gubaidulina also found her own voice by exploring innovative instrumental ensemble pairings: *Detto I* is a sonata written for organ and percussions and *Descensio* is written for three trombones, three percussionists, harp, harpsichord/celesta and piano/celesta. Guided by her early discovery of Judaism, Gubaidulina's *Ten Preludes for Solo Cello*

carries religious symbolism: in the 7th movement, bowing directions are written to guide the cellist to draw a crucifix using the bow arm. Sofia's work for solo piano *Toccata-Troncata* uses pitch clusters and intense intervallic chromaticism instead of traditional tonal centers. Although the pianist creates an improvisatory feel through rhythmic flexibility and frequent use of fermatas, the structure carries a clear architecture. Towards the end of the piece, the melody slowly ascends in chromatic half-steps while two half-steps below each melodic pitch are dampened silently, creating a soft echo of chromatic clusters and a direct path into the spiritual realm. The last piece in this evening's program *Invention* is marked staccato throughout. The intense intervallic dissonance, rapid change of time signatures and syncopations combine effectively to culminate into a climax at the end of the piece into the lowest note of the piano.

ABOUT SAMANTHA CHO

Born in Los Angeles, pianist **Samantha Cho** is active professionally as a performer and educator. Her recent appearances include performing as a guest artist on San Francisco Symphony Chinese New Year Concert, streamed on San Francisco Symphony +, Seattle's Classical King FM, Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert in Chicago Cultural Center, San Francisco's Noontime Concert Series, University of Minnesota Morris, and more. 2021–2022 highlights include solo recitals at Old First Concerts and National Christian Church (DC) and a chamber music recital at Sunset Music & Arts. Passionate in chamber music, Samantha has performed with members of the San Francisco Symphony, San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra and Houston Symphony, and she has also performed with Kenwood Symphony as winner of the 19th Annual Master's Concerto & Aria Competition. Her performances have been broadcast on WFMT, Classical King FM, Arte TV, KTSF 26 and NBC Bay Area.

Samantha is currently an adjunct instructor of music at Southwest College, where she teaches class piano and music appreciation courses. She has also taught pre-college chamber music at San Francisco Conservatory of Music since 2016.

Samantha received her BM at Northwestern University, MM at Cleveland Institute of Music and DMA at University of Minnesota. She is grateful to her following teachers: Robert Turner, Alexander Braginsky, Sylvia Wang, Paul Schenly and Kathryn Brown.

COMING UP AT OLD FIRST CONCERTS

Sunday, August 22 at 4 pm

San Francisco International Piano Festival—Nicholas Phillips

A varied and compelling array of works, including World Premieres by Quinn Mason, Mark Winges, and Mark Olivieri, and works by Sahba Aminikia, Reena Esmail, Carter Pann, and more.

Friday, August 27 at 8 pm

Terrie Baune, violin & John Chernoff, piano

Grażyna Bacewicz's *Sonata No. 4* and Béla Bartók's *Sonata No. 1*

Sunday, August 29 at 4 pm

San Francisco International Piano Festival—*Les Années Folles*

featuring Jory Vinikour & Philippe LeRoy, harpsichords &

Gwendolyn Mok & Jeffrey LaDeur, piano

Works by Boulanger, Poulenc, Couperin, Tailleferre, & Ravel.

Sunday, September 5 at 4 pm

Mike Greensill & John Wiitala

Songs composed by jazz musicians, from Errol Garner to George Shearing, and Duke Ellington to Mike Greensill originals.

Saturday, September 11 at 8 pm

The Illustrated Pianist

Pianist-composers present their interpretations of short stories from Ray Bradbury's iconic collection *The Illustrated Man*. Presented with the Ross McKee Foundation for the Musical Arts.

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Enthusiastic Applause (\$100 - \$249)	Michael Korbholz	Hal Christiansen
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Old First Concerts' piano is a New York Steinway D model, circa 1980, with Hamburg action. It was donated by The Stanley Ibler Fund, and is maintained by David Love Piano Service and Restoration.