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Sunday, January 30, 2022 at 4 PM

Old First Church

1751 Sacramento St. at Van Ness Ave.

San Francisco, CA 94109

(415) 474-1608 www.oldfirstconcerts.org

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.

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 all 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** with information about upcoming events plus photos and videos from our concerts.

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Friday, March 18 at 8 pm

Friction Quartet—Doug Machiz, *cello*; Otis Harriel, *violin*;

Kevin Rogers, *violin*; Rachyl Martinez, *viola*

with Melinda Martinez Becker, *mezzo soprano*

Friction Quartet are joined by soprano Melinda Martinez

Becker in a program featuring lieder by Clara Schumann and

Fanny Mendelssohn's *String Quartet in E-flat major*.

Sunday, March 27 at 4 pm

Junior Bach Festival

An all-J. S. Bach concert showcasing some of the most talented young musicians in Northern California. Hear J. S. Bach's music played with great skill and youthful exuberance!

Friday, April 8 at 8 pm

Laure de Marcellus, *mezzo soprano*; Alberto Urroz, *piano*

Spend an evening in 19th century Paris at a salon concert discovering the seldom-heard music of Pauline Viardot and her admirers—including Fauré, Gounod, Chapí, and Saint-Saëns—with this passionate and intimate program!

For tickets & more information visit www.oldfirstconcerts.org

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PROGRAM

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

String Trio in B-flat major, D.581 (1817)

Allegro moderato

Andante

Menuetto: Allegretto

Rondo: Allegretto

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

Movement for Piano Quartet in A minor: Nicht zu schnell (1876)

INTERMISSION

Max Bruch (1838-1920)

Piano Quintet in G minor (1886)

Allegro moderato

Adagio

Scherzo: Allegro molto

Finale: Agitato

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Franz Schubert *String Trio in B-flat major, D. 581*

The reasons for the existence of Schubert's *String Trio, D. 581* are a bit of a mystery. It was Schubert's third crack at a string trio between 1814 and 1817, with all three attempts in B-flat major. Schubert's chamber works can be roughly divided into two groups. The first comprises a large number of relatively infrequently played works, composed before 1819, and intended for domestic use by amateur players (often the members of Schubert's own immediate family). The second group contains works almost all composed in 1824 or later and written for public performance by professional musicians. This second group is much smaller, but holds the pieces that are fixtures on concert stages today. One the one

hand, this string trio seems far too ambitious for an ensemble drawn from the Schubert family, but, on the other, Schubert would have had no prospects for a professional performance, or even for publication at this time. (Schubert did not publish a chamber work until 1824.) Schubert clearly cared about the work, as he not only completed it, but also made a revised version the same year; and it is this version that will be performed today.

From a player's point of view, the trio is uncommonly well suited to its ensemble. Many string trios (even those by Beethoven) can give an uncomfortable impression of attempting to squeeze the four parts of a string quartet onto three music stands. Schubert, however, works in elegant three-part textures, perhaps since these arise naturally in vocal and piano music.

The string trio comes from around the same time as Schubert's 5th and 6th symphonies, and, like those orchestral works, is in a light and graceful style of the late Classical works, which he had played in his student orchestra, and that of Rossini, who was all the rage in Vienna at the time.

Gustav Mahler *Movement for Piano Quartet in A minor*

Like Max Bruch's *Piano Quintet* that will conclude this program, the piano quartet movement by Gustav Mahler is a late 19th century work that had to wait until the second half of the 20th century to be published and enter the international chamber music repertoire. The piano quartet movement was composed after the first of Mahler's three years as a student at the Vienna Conservatory, during the summer of 1876. It is not only the sole surviving chamber work by Mahler, but also the only remaining piece from his student years. The movement opens a window into a different Mahler than the one familiar from his later career. Instead of Mahler, man of the theater,

COMING UP AT OLD FIRST CONCERTS

Friday, February 4 at 8 pm

Circadian String Quartet—*Fanny and Felix*

Monika Gruber, violin; David Ryther, violin; Omid Assadi, viola; David Wishnia, cello

Celebrate the enduring musicality and strong bond of the famous sister and brother composers—Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn—both prodigiously talented musicians but unequally supported and encouraged in their talents due to the prevalent sexism of the time.

Sunday, February 6 at 4 pm

Sierra Ensemble: Matthew Vincent, violin; Janis Lieberman, horn; Marc Steiner, piano

Sierra Ensemble performs the premieres of two genre-expanding new works for horn, violin and piano: the World Premiere of Richard Aldag's *Trio for Violin, French horn, and Piano* and works by Charles Koechlin, Lennox Berkeley, and Johannes Brahms.

Saturday, March 12 at 7 pm

3rd Annual Pacific Pythagorean Music Festival: *Modes of Change*

featuring Del Sol String Quartet, Ken Ueno, Viola Yip, Hafez Modirzadeh, and Keshav Batish

A festival celebrating the experimental innovators and traditional masters of pure-ratio harmonies, highlighting Persian scales with the World Premiere of Reza Vali's newest string quartet, plus a World Premiere of Madeline Ashman's *Gravitation*.

Sunday, March 13 at 4 pm

Hadley McCarroll, piano—*Pancultural!*

McCarroll's new program embraces the different musical traditions found across our globe, spanning America, Germany, the Czech Republic, and India, including the West Coast Premiere of B.P. Herrington's *How Come That Blood—seven variations and a canonic rhapsody on a local band*.

For tickets & more information visit www.oldfirstconcerts.org

teaches at the SoCal Chamber Music Workshop and the Telluride Chamber Music Festival.

Pianist **Elizabeth Schumann** has a diverse career portfolio of projects, recordings, and performances that have brought her all over the world as recitalist, chamber musician, and concerto soloist. *The Washington Post Magazine* noted her playing as “deft, relentless, and devastatingly good—the sort of performance you experience not so much with your ears as your solar plexus.”

The first-place winner of both the Bösendorfer International Piano Competition and the Pacific International Piano Competition, Elizabeth has won over 25 prizes and awards in other major national and international competitions, including the Cleveland International Piano Competition and the Hilton Head International Piano Competition. Elizabeth was honored with the prestigious Gilmore Young Artists Award, and was highlighted in a PBS Television documentary on the Gilmore Festival.

She has performed solo recitals and chamber music concerts worldwide, in such venues as the Kennedy Center, Vienna’s Bösendorfer Saal, Toronto’s Koerner Hall, and Montreal’s Place des Arts. Featured at the International UNICEF benefit concert for Hurricane Katrina Victims, the Cannes Film Festival, the Gilmore Festival, Australia’s Huntington Festival, the Musica Viva chamber music series, the Ravinia Rising Stars Series, and National Public Radio’s *Performance Today*, her recitals have been broadcast live on public radio and television in cities around the world, including Washington D.C., New York, Sydney, Cleveland, Montréal, Dallas, and Chicago. Elizabeth gave the world premiere performance of Carl Vine’s *Sonata No. 3*, which the composer dedicated to her.

renowned conductor and composer of symphonies and orchestral songs, we have an impressionable teenager, new to the big city of Vienna, concentrating on the piano, and on composing chamber music. Given the controversies surrounding Mahler’s later career and the many stories of composers from Berlioz to Debussy who have chafed under the restrictions of conservatory curricula (to say nothing of Mahler’s exceedingly undistinguished prior performance in educational settings), it may come as something of a surprise that Mahler seems to have been a very successful and contented student at the Vienna Conservatory, winning prizes and doing well in his classes.

The movement is conceptually in sonata-allegro form, but feels more like a fantasia on two motives. The most important of these is heard right at the opening; a three-note figure (big leap up, small fall down). It is identical to the first three pitches of the prelude to Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*, no doubt anything but a coincidence, as this was the time of Mahler’s initial infatuation with Wagner’s music. Mahler worries this motive for some time over pulsing triplets from the piano, before the tempo speeds up for a brief transition. This leads to a second motive, descending, in the major. The opening section is repeated, followed by an extensive development of both motives. There is an unexpected violin cadenza near the conclusion of the movement, which slows and quiets to a final statement of the opening motive.

Max Bruch *Piano Quintet in G minor*

Most writings about Max Bruch paint a consistent, if not particularly flattering picture. He is generally presented as a composer who remained rooted in the musical styles of his youth throughout his long career and well into the 20th century, and as one who neither engaged with the nominally progressive developments of Richard Wagner and his

acolytes nor successfully competed with his near contemporary Johannes Brahms. Bruch's first violin concerto is inevitably cited as a fixture in the concert repertoire, with passing mention perhaps granted to his *Scottish Fantasy* and his *Kol Nidrei*, before pointing to the current obscurity of the rest of his output. None of this is exactly untrue, but it seems far more meaningful to present Bruch as a highly successful participant in the musical networks in which he was employed than to make comparisons with composers that were essentially in different lines of work. Bruch was both a conductor of choral societies in Germany and in England and, in the latter part of his career, a highly respected teacher of composition at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin. Neither the institutions of amateur choral singing, steeped in the revival of Handel's oratorios and nurtured by more recent works in neo-Baroque styles, nor the developing world of music schools, devoted to the conservation of established practices, encouraged or rewarded stylistic experimentation. Bruch's most successful works during his lifetime were large scale works for chorus and orchestra, and their current neglect reflects the demise of the institutions for which they were created rather than any lack of quality.

Bruch's only conducting post outside of Germany was in Liverpool from 1880 to 1883, where he directed the Liverpool Philharmonic Society, made up of an amateur choir and a semi-professional orchestra. Although hired primarily to direct the choir, his piano quintet was composed at the request of Andrew Kurtz, chair of the Philharmonic Society Committee, owner of a chemical plant and dedicated amateur pianist. Kurtz intended the work for his regular sessions with a string quartet of fellow music-lovers. Bruch composed very little chamber music, once writing that he would "rather compose three large oratorios with chorus and orchestra than three string quartets," and it is notable that on this rare

Claude Frank and members of the Cleveland and Juilliard Quartets.

Jeremy maintains an active teaching studio out of his apartment in the Haight and loves living and hiking in the beautiful city of San Francisco.

Susan Freier, *violin/viola*, and co-Artistic Director of the Ives Collective, earned degrees in music and biology from Stanford University as a Ford Scholar and continued her studies at the Eastman School of Music where she co-founded the award-winning Chester String Quartet. The Chester went on to win the Munich, Portsmouth (UK) and Discovery Competitions and were the quartet-in-residence at Indiana University, South Bend.

In 1989 Susan returned to her native Bay Area and joined the Stanford faculty and the Stanford String Quartet. She performs with the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players and has been an artist/faculty member at the Newport Music Festival, Garth Newell, Music in the Mountains, Rocky Ridge Music Center, and the Schlern and Orfeo Music Festivals (Italy). Susan teaches and performs at the Mendocino Music Festival, the SoCal Music Workshop and the Telluride Chamber Music Festival.

Stephen Harrison, *cellist*, has been on the Stanford University faculty since 1983. A graduate of Oberlin College and Boston University, he has been solo cellist of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players since 1985.

Stephen has been on the faculty of the Pacific Music Festival, the Orfeo and Schlern International Music Festivals (Italy) and the Rocky Ridge Music Center. He is currently principal cellist at the Mendocino Music Festival, and performs and

Arts Experience, Young Audiences of NY Children's Programs, Lincoln Center Student Programs and the Minnesota School & Resource Center for the Arts Touring Program, Seaside Music Academy and Pacifica School Volunteers. Her past music festival appearances include the Caramoor, Bard, Olympic and Grand Teton Music Festivals.

Kay attended the Juilliard School as a student of Dorothy DeLay. While at Juilliard, she received full scholarships for her Bachelor, Master's and Doctoral degree programs. She also studied with Michael Davis at Ohio State University. Her concerto and chamber music recordings can be heard on Phillips, Nonesuch, Innova, MusicMasters, Koch International, Gramavision and Albany Records.

Jeremy Preston is a section violin player with the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, and the principal second of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra. Prior to this he was the Associate Concertmaster of the Oakland East Bay Symphony and a tenured member of the North Carolina Symphony for seven seasons. He has performed with many orchestras throughout the U.S. and in the Bay Area, including the San Francisco Symphony and the New Century Chamber Orchestra. Jeremy is an avid chamber musician and has performed at venues throughout the Bay Area. Previously, he was a member of the North Carolina String Quartet and frequently performed with the Mallarme Chamber Players, the Peace College Manning Chamber Players, New Music Raleigh, and the Eastern Music Festival Chamber Players.

Trained at the New England Conservatory of Music, Rice University, and the Cleveland Institute of Music, Jeremy's teachers include Marylou Speaker Churchill, Lynn Chang, Kathleen Winkler, Sally Thomas, and William Preucil. His chamber music coaches include Norman Fisher, Pamela, and

occasion he was interacting with the then-waning culture of domestic music making by accomplished amateurs rather than with the emerging world of public chamber music by professionals. Bruch does not seem to have made the request a high priority, taking five years before sending a manuscript to Kurtz in 1886, and this copy was incomplete, breaking off near the beginning of the last movement. It took more nagging from Kurtz to elicit a complete last movement from Bruch in 1888. The quintet was not published until 1988.

The piano quintet is an exemplary specimen of a chamber work intended for the satisfaction of the musicians playing it (historically, the main goal of chamber music). It seems to have been carefully crafted for its Liverpool recipients. None of the parts is technically demanding, although the piano part suggests that Kurtz was an adept player. There are no particularly tricky ensemble issues, and all players get moments in the melodic sunshine. It is also a highly attractive work for both player and listener.

The first movement, in sonata form, is in a moderate tempo, with a handwritten note in blue pencil from Bruch on the manuscript score reminding the players (in English) "not too fast!" It opens with a sort of introduction of tranquil phrases in block chords traded between strings and piano. The first theme proper is more energetic, combining a march-like melody with a repeated triplet accompaniment. This theme dissolves into a fragment tossed back and forth by the violins before the cello enters with the singing second theme in the tenor register, now overflowing sixteenths in the piano. The development combines rhythms, motives and accompaniment figures from all sections of the exposition, and blends into the beginning of the recapitulation. Here, the viola gets a turn with the second theme, and the movement

ends with a reprise of the tranquil phrases from the very opening.

The second movement is an adagio, but a handwritten metronome mark indicates a comfortably flowing tempo. The movement is based on two ideas. The first is a gentle melody sung by the upper strings in parallel chords over dotted figures from the piano, while the second is marked by rising scales in triplets, first played the viola. The big moment in the movement is the return of the first idea, now forte, with the strings in assertive octaves, supported by rippling 32nd notes in the piano.

The following scherzo begins somewhat mysteriously with little unaccompanied fragments before building to double forte scales highly reminiscent of the analogous movement in Robert Schumann's *Piano Quintet*. The trio is also Schumannesque, legato throughout, and filled with quiet swells, provided a strong contrast to the bustling passage work of the surrounding scherzo.

The final movement is again in sonata form, and perhaps betrays some impatience on Bruch's part to complete the work. An initial chord and cascading triplets announce a forceful theme from the violins, again with something of a march character. This leads to a second theme over a pulsing bass pedal, quieter, but still with strongly marked rhythms, heard first in the piano and then repeated by the first violin (here the guiding spirit seems to be Felix Mendelssohn). The original manuscript breaks off immediately after this theme has been stated. Bruch eventually completed the movement by closing the exposition with some rather perfunctory arpeggiated chords, a vigorous development, and a fairly literal recapitulation, and capped the movement with a brief coda.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Kay Stern is the Concertmaster of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra, a position she has held since 1994. She is Professor of Violin and Chamber Music at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. In the past, Kay served as assistant to Dorothy DeLay at the Aspen Music Festival, assistant to the Juilliard Quartet at the Juilliard School and held faculty positions at the Cleveland Institute of Music, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and the Music Academy of the West. She has taught and coached at various music festivals around the world and been in residence at Wellesley College and San Diego State University.

Kay has been featured on television and radio. She has appeared in PBS's *Live from Lincoln Center*, CNN's *Women Today*, Minnesota Public Radio's *A Prairie Home Companion with Garrison Keillor* and WQXR-NY *Robert Sherman's Listening Room*. Kay has also contributed several articles in *Chamber Music America*. As the former first violinist and founding member of the Lark String Quartet, she performed and gave master classes throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia.

Some of Kay's Concertmaster positions include the Orchestra of St. Luke's, Concordia at Lincoln Center, the Cabrillo Music Festival, the Cleveland Chamber Symphony and the Youngstown Symphony Orchestra. She regularly performs as Concertmaster for many movie sound tracks and video games recorded at Skywalker Ranch. Kay is an active chamber musician, collaborating with colleagues around the world. She regularly plays for fund raising events and has helped raise money for medical research, schools, arts organizations, student orchestras and political fundraisers. Some of the educational and community programs she participated in include the New York Philharmonic Musical