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*From Brahms to Piazzolla
through Reza Vali*

Basma Edrees, *violin*
Ava Nazar, *piano*

Sunday, July 17, 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!

VOLUNTEERING WITH OLD FIRST CONCERTS

Enjoy free concerts, make new friends, and help support your favorite non-profit organization! Volunteering with Old First Concerts is a wonderful opportunity for students, seniors, or anyone with a passion for music—and we'll work with your availability!

contact: curtishuth@oldfirstconcerts for more information.

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/

You can also find us on **Instagram @oldfirstconcerts** with information about upcoming events plus photos and videos from our concerts.

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COMING UP AT OLD FIRST CONCERTS

Friday, July 22 at 8 pm

Lee Alan Nolan, piano—*From Rags to Mystics*

Lee Alan Nolan brings excitement, intelligence, flair and depth with a program featuring works by Bay Area composers Vera Ivanova & Bruce Bennett plus Joplin, Aufderheide, Giblin, Scriabin, and Melnyk.

Friday, August 5 at 8 pm

Arjun K. Verma, sitar & Nilan Chaudhuri, table

Distinguished members of the young generation of North Indian Classical music in the tradition of the great maestros Ali Akbar Khan and Swapan Chaudhuri.

Sunday, August 7 at 4 pm

Vishnu R, navtar—*Strings Beyond Borders*

Award-winning performer, composer, and inventor Vishnu R performs works by South Indian composers, contemporary masters, and original compositions on his patented, unique, and revolutionary 9-string instrument the navtar.

Sunday, August 21 at 3 pm

San Francisco International Piano Festival presents Rachel Breen

Brilliant pianist, thoughtful musician, and rising star in the classical world, Rachel Breen performs works by Bull, Scriabin, Medtner, Schumann, and Beethoven.

For tickets & more information visit www.oldfirstconcerts.org

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PROGRAM

Reza Vali (b. 1952)

Love Drunk (from *Folk Songs, Set No. 16B*)

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Sonata for piano and violin No. 2 in major, Op. 100

Allegro amabile

Andante tranquillo—Vivace—Andante—Vivace di più—

Andante—Vivace

Allegretto grazioso (quasi andante)

Reza Vali

Three Romantic Songs

Moderato

Adagio—Molto allegro

Tango Johannes

Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992)

Le Grand Tango

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Love Drunk (Folk Songs, Set No. 16B) was commissioned by Thomas Jones and completed in July 2014. This is the sixteenth set of an ongoing cycle of Persian folk songs that Reza Vali have been composing since 1978.

The work's four songs (songs without words) reflect upon different aspects of love. In song No. 1, the lover is longing for a reunion with the beloved. Song No. 2 is a dialogue, across the dimensions, between the deceased beloved and the grieving lover. The song reflects upon the grief of separation-- in this case, separation by death. The sensual and the spiritual aspects of love intersect in song No. 3. The melodies of the third song are accompanied by quotes from the Christmas carol *Silent*

Night, Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, and Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*. The final song No. 4 describes the intoxicating joy when the lovers meet.

Described by one of Brahms's friends as "a caress", the *Sonata for piano and violin No. 2 in major, Op. 100* was written in the summer of 1886 in Switzerland and was premiered in Vienna on December 2nd of the same year by violinist Joseph Hellmesberger and Brahms himself at the piano. This sonata has been nicknamed the 'Thun' sonata, in reference to the Swiss town where it was written, the 'Meistersinger' sonata in reference to the first three notes of *Walther's Prize Song* from Richard Wagner's *Der Meistersinger*, but probably the most suitable label given to it was by the biographer Robert Schauflier and that is simply 'Song'. This simple yet potent description acknowledges the work's highly lyrical character and Brahms's use of several of his own songs as thematic material for the work.

Three Romantic Songs is written for and dedicated to Reza Vali's wife Nan. They both love Brahms and this piece is an homage to Brahms. The third song contains a "limping" tango (in 7/8 instead of 8/8) called *Tango Johannes* (imagine Brahms trying to dance tango with Clara Schumann!).

Premiered in New Orleans on April 24th 1990, *Le Grand Tango* is a 20 minute piece originally written for cello and piano. It was dedicated to the renowned cellist Mstislav Rostropovich. "The work bears all Piazzolla's hallmarks: tight construction, strong accents, harmonic tensions, rhythmic complexity and melodic inspiration." -Maria Susana Azzi

ABOUT THE MUSICIANS

Basma and Ava met at The Juilliard School while pursuing their Masters degree. They have been friends ever since collaborating on a multiple of performances including a highlight performance at the United Nations in New York. Trained in the

Western Classical musical tradition and growing up in their respective Middle Eastern musical traditions, Egyptian violinist **Basma Edrees** and Iranian pianist **Ava Nazar** feature the rich aesthetics of both musical worlds and are passionate about expanding musical access across various communities. For more information about each individual artist, please visit their websites at basmaedreesviolin.com and avanazar.com.

Reza Vali was born in Ghazvin, Iran, in 1952. He began his music studies at the Conservatory of Music in Tehran. In 1972 he went to Austria and studied music education and composition at the Academy of Music in Vienna, and continued his studies at the University of Pittsburgh, receiving his Ph.D. in music theory and composition in 1985. Mr. Vali has been a faculty member of the School of Music at Carnegie Mellon University since 1988. He has received numerous honors and commissions, including the honor prize of the Austrian Ministry of Arts and Sciences, two Andrew W. Mellon Fellowships, commissions from the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, Kronos Quartet, the Carpe Diem String Quartet, the Seattle Chamber Players, and the Arizona Friends of Chamber Music, as well as grants from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, The Pittsburgh Foundation, and the Pittsburgh Board of Public Education. Vali's orchestral compositions have been performed in the United States by the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Seattle Symphony, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, the Baltimore Symphony, the Memphis Symphony Orchestra, and Orchestra 2001. His chamber works have received performances by Cuarteto Latinoamericano, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, the Carpe Diem String Quartet, Kronos Quartet, the Seattle Chamber Players, and the Da Capo Chamber Players. His music has been performed in Europe, China, Chile, Mexico, Hong Kong, and Australia and is recorded on the Deutsche Grammophon, Naxos, New Albion, MMC, Ambassador, Albany, and ABC Classics labels.