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Songs My Mother Taught Me

AnnaLotte Smith, *piano*

Sunday, July 7, 2024 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!

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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COMING UP AT OLD FIRST CONCERTS

Sunday, July 28 at 4 pm

Le Due Muse—NEOCLASSICAL!

Sarah Hong, cello & Makiko Ooka, piano

Le Due Muse is a cello and piano duo team formed by the Bay Area cellist Sarah Hong and her long time duo partner, Japanese pianist Makiko Ooka in the year 2000. They return to Old First Concerts to share works by Ravel and Bridge, neoclassical pioneer composers who influenced Britten, as well as works by Britten himself.

Friday, August 16 at 8 pm

The Zēlos Saxophone Quartet

Committed to performing on saxophones that fit the acoustical specifications of its inventor Adolphe Sax, the Zēlos Quartet is dedicated to performing a wide array of repertoire ranging from underrepresented contemporary works to transcriptions from the baroque, classical, and romantic eras.

Saturday, August 17 at 8 pm

Motoko Honda's Simple Excesses Quartet

Featuring Northern California's most versatile and innovative players, Simple Excesses Quartet's exciting repertoire is sets of compositions which unify jazz, classical chamber music, improvisation and experimental soundscapes. Intricate and dynamic and often surprising, the music is like a flight in the clouds for both performers and audiences.

For tickets & more information visit www.oldfirstconcerts.org

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PROGRAM

Sofia Gubaidulina (b. 1931)

Chaconne

Johannes Brahms, (1833–1897)

Intermezzi, Op. 117

Intermezzo No. 1 in Eb major, Andante moderato

Intermezzo No. 2 in Bb minor, Andante non troppo e con molta espressione

Intermezzo No. 3. in C# minor, Andante con moto

Reena Esmail (b. 1983)

Rang de Basant

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

from **Images, Book 1, L. 110**

Reflets dans l'eau

Monica Chew (b. 1977)

Ice Calf

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943)

Moments Musicaux No. 4 in E minor

ABOUT THE MUSIC

The heart of this program centers around the Brahms *Intermezzi*, a set I played for the last 10 years often in the living room of my late great-grandmother Marianne in Germany. A pianist herself, she would always sit there quietly and supportively listening. At the end of her life while I was playing the first intermezzo for her, she quietly said, "I never knew there was beauty in dying." She proceeded to tell me that her mother had played that same piece for her every night as a child and she had also played the same intermezzi her whole life. I never knew why I had such a deep connection to this piece until I realized the soul of this music was imprinted through the women in my life. The music gene skipped several generations from my great-grandmother to me, and so as a

young adult I tried to soak up all of the musical spirit I could from my Uroma. As I eventually began playing each of these composers for my Uroma, we would discuss the heart and soul of each piece but her advice would remain the same, “keep it simple.”

The program begins through the continuing spirit of female strength and creativity with the *Chaconne* by Gubaidulina who drew her inspiration from Bach’s legacy. Growing up listening to my Uroma hum her way through so much Bach at the piano inspired me to present Bach’s legacy in a reimagined format celebrating the future of music through a female perspective. Drawing inspiration from the many life lessons my Uroma shared, the *Intermezzi* by Brahms traces the winding paths of our own lives. Leading through the opening lullaby of childhood in the first intermezzo, through the unexpected turbulent beauty of life in the second, to the grief of acceptance at the end of life for the final movement. While the core of the program looks inward, the second half of the program shifts our perspective to look beyond ourselves. It is a reminder of how our stories are rarely singular as the stories of life and music inevitably become a tapestry woven into our own. It draws inspiration from our blended societies from the rhythms of the classical Indian raga in Esmail’s *Rang de Basant* juxtaposed with the cascading French harmonies in Debussy’s *Images*. I have always experienced life through the lens of my tactile-auditory synesthesia which is best highlighted through the lyrical colors and textures in these two contrasted composers. In a sense, these final pieces embrace the sensory way I experience the world on a daily basis. *Ice Calf* by Chew continues the narrative of our shared tapestry by highlighting the reality of an uncertain future from climate change. I believe music becomes truly powerful when it connects us not just to ourselves and our own traditions, but draws our attention to the broader world and the concerns facing us all today. It was the continuous song of embracing the past and future my great grandmother taught me. Rachmanoniff’s fourth *Moment Musicaux* has become my own battle cry and my promise to myself to never give up. A reminder that meaningful change and growth can happen each day both in ourselves and through our connections with those around us.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Young American pianist **AnnaLotte Smith** navigates the worlds of tradition and innovation, captivating audiences with her musical versatility and artistic depth. She has achieved notable success in multiple international piano competitions, including winning the Grand Prix at the Second Baden-Württemberg International Piano Competition in Germany. Her performances have taken her from an orchestral debut at age 12 to appearances on both sides of the Atlantic, including multiple solo tours and appearances at PianoTexas, the International Mozarteum Summer Academy, the Mostly Modern Festival, and the Accademia Pianistica Internazionale di Imola, among others. AnnaLotte continuously explores across genres, celebrating the traditions of the classical repertoire while highlighting the work of contemporary composers. During the 2023-2024 season, she was featured on harpsichord in the seminal Bach300 Festival, celebrating the legacy of 300 years of Bach in Leipzig, Germany. She has also performed world premieres at the 2024 Klavierhaus Salon Series in New York City and is currently performing a series of concerts in Boston and Chicago featuring the world premiere of the song cycle *Sirens*, exploring the impact of climate change. AnnaLotte’s performance practice research has brought her into demand as a music consultant at the historic instrument collection at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Additionally, her work in producing and composing on film and TV sets from NYC to India most recently garnered her the Best First-Time Producer at the 2023 New York International Film Festival.

AnnaLotte holds degrees from the Boston Conservatory of Music and Westminster Choir College of Rider University, with additional studies at Princeton University. AnnaLotte is deeply committed to the power of music to address pressing social issues and works to promote equality and human rights through extensive benefit concerts, fundraising initiatives, and educational outreach programs. With each performance, she continues to push the boundaries of what it means to be a pianist and a socially conscious artist in the 21st century.