

Ching-Yun's *Mission*



A superlative mix of virtuosic talent, unfailing determination, and a commitment to empowering young artists serve as the foundation of Ching-Yun's international career as a concert pianist, educator, and entrepreneurial leader.

Since winning top prizes at the 12th Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition and Concert Artists Guild International Competition, she has astounded audiences across the U.S., Europe, and Asia, performing sold-out concerts at many of the world's leading venues — including Alice Tully Hall, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, Wigmore Hall, and Taipei National Concert Hall.

But for Ching-Yun, being a musician in the 21st century isn't just about playing the piano well — it's about making classical music more accessible through captivating programs that tell human stories inclusive of gender and race. By juxtaposing audience favorites with underperformed treasures and newly commissioned works, Ching-Yun's recitals consistently offer musical and narrative contrasts that encourage people to listen deeply and discover anew the work of even the most well-known composers.

Program 1

Liszt: Metamorphosis

Les jeux d'eau à la Villa d'Este, from Années de pèlerinage — Troisième année

Six Lieder Transcriptions

Leise flehen meine Lieder (Schubert)
Ständchen von Shakespeare (Schubert)
Auf dem Wasser zu Singen (Schubert)
Ave Maria (Schubert)
Erkönig (Schubert)
Widmung (R. Schumann)

— *Intermission* —

Three Concert Études

Il lamento
La leggierrezza
Un sospiro

Rhapsodie espagnole

About This Program

A perennial favorite with Ching-Yun's audiences, this program explores works that showcase the important role literature, spirituality, and travel play in Liszt's music for solo piano. Nuanced and multifaceted, Ching-Yun takes the listeners through the evolution of Franz Liszt through his many creative stages: a storytelling of an emotional and spiritual-filled journey.

The opening *Les jeux d'eau à la Villa d'Este* presents Liszt as a composer of vivid, painterly impressions decades before the musical style made famous by Debussy and Ravel. With its waves of whispering and shimmering arpeggios gliding throughout the full range of the keyboard, this work immediately enchants listeners and draws them in.

A collection of six lieder transcriptions speak to a side of Liszt often forgotten — one rooted in his spirituality and deep love for German poetry. These Schubert and Schumann lieder are instantly recognizable to many listeners, and even without their texts, Liszt's mesmerizing transcriptions chart a journey of the heart — reflecting on love and longing, the passage of time, and the supernatural realm that lies beyond what our eyes can see.

The program's second half offers some of Liszt's most colorful and spirited music. The Three Concert Études are scintillating tone poems that, in terms of cinematic scope, match the power of those he wrote for large orchestra. And the *Rhapsodie espagnole* brings the recital to a showstopping conclusion in an exhilarating celebration of Spanish culture, inspired by the composer's own travels to the Iberian Peninsula in 1845.

Program 2

1905

Leoš Janáček Sonata 1. X. 1905, "*From the Street*" (1905)

Enrique Granados *Quejas, o La Maja y el ruiseñor*, from *Goyescas* (1909–10)

Maurice Ravel *Gaspard de la nuit* (1908)

— *Intermission* —

Claude Debussy *Clair de lune* (1905)

Sergei Rachmaninoff Prelude in G Major, op. 32, no. 5 (1910)

Sergei Rachmaninoff Prelude in G Minor, op. 23, no. 5 (1903)

Isaac Albéniz *Iberia*, Book 1 (1905–6)

About This Program

A heart-rending journey from devastation to optimism, this program offers a kaleidoscopic look at how composers across Europe were inspired by the art, poetry, and political struggles they experienced at the dawn of the 20th century.

Janacek's "*From the Street*" Sonata opens the program with tumultuous drama that will feel all too resonant to today's audiences. A devastating tribute to the Moravian carpenter František Pavlík, who was murdered by German forces during a 1905 political demonstration in Brno, Janacek's searing sonata expresses the shock, anger — and glimmers of hope — felt by those protesting authoritarian regimes around the globe.

Following that stormy opening, the central movement of Granados's *Goyescas* — *Quejas, o La Maja y el ruiseñor* (The Maiden and the Nightingale) — is a lyric nocturne that displays the composer's operatic sense of characterization, complete with evocative bird calls. Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit*, based on poems of Aloysius Bertrand, is as unsettling and nightmarish as it is ravishing and colorful. Evoking gossamer waterfalls, barren deserts, and the moonlit mischief of a dancing goblin, Ravel's pianistic masterpiece features astounding leaps across the keyboard, lightning-fast passagework, and slithering chromatic scales that give even the bravest of listeners goosebumps.

The program's second half moves from midnight reverie into blazing light. Debussy's beloved *Clair de Lune* offers a calm contrast to Ravel's nightmarish tableaux — a work of incredible delicacy that explores beauty and sorrow in equal measure. Following a pair of impressionistic preludes from Rachmaninoff, the first book of Albéniz's evocative *Iberia* transports listeners to warm spring afternoons in Spain. Combining elements of Spanish dance — from the *fandango* and *saeta* to the Andalusian *zapateado* — the work culminates in a joyous celebration of Corpus Christi Day in Seville, complete with festive mariachi bands and flamenco guitars that gently fade into the distance.

Program 3

Women Pioneers

Lili Boulanger

Prelude in D-flat Major

Jennifer Higdon

Secret & Glass Gardens

Fanny Mendelssohn

Selections from *Das Jahr* (The Year)

II. Februar

III. März

VI. Juni

VIII. August

IX. September

XII. Dezember

— Intermission —

Gabriela Lena Frank

Sonata Andina

Unsuik Chin

Six Piano Études, no. 5: Toccata

Elena Kats-Chernin

Eliza Aria

Margaret Bonds

Troubled Water

About This Program

This program highlights the significant legacy of women composers from the early 19th century to today, from Fanny Mendelssohn — a prolific figure who, unlike her famous brother, was told music could be no more than "ornament" in her life — to Jennifer Higdon, Gabriela Lena Frank, and Unsuk Chin, three of today's most in-demand composers. Featuring music of contrasting forms, styles, and influences, "Women Pioneers" offers fascinating connections and fresh perspectives on the role of women in Western music history.

The Prelude in D-flat Major by Lili Boulanger — the first woman to win the prestigious Prix de Rome — opens the program with a peaceful, hypnotic atmosphere that slowly intensifies to a triumphant conclusion. Jennifer Higdon's *Secret & Glass Gardens* is a shimmering journey of wonder and discovery, filled with captivating musical colors and thrilling variations in texture, while Fanny Mendelssohn's *Das Jahr* offers listeners a suite of character pieces ranging from a raucous Carnival-esque scherzo to a gently flowing fantasy that contemplates loss and the passage of time.

The program's second half brings together four composers whose music is deeply rooted in their heritage and upbringing.

Gabriela Lena Frank's *Sonata Andina* skillfully mixes Western classical and Andean folk music traditions inspired by *mestizaje*, the utopian concept whereby cultures can peacefully coexist without subjugation or oppression. A spiky toccata from Unsuk Chin's Six Piano Études reflects the composer's wild experiments in sound — an incessantly playful stream of clipped notes and evolving harmonies that provide a striking contrast to the moving, meditative lyricism of Elena Kats-Chernin's *Eliza Aria*.

And *Troubled Water* by Margaret Bonds — a student of Florence Price and the first Black woman to perform with a major American symphony orchestra — positions the famous spiritual "Wade in the Water" as a launching point for mixing classical virtuosity with elements of gospel, jazz, and blues, bringing the recital to a thrilling climax.

Program 4

Rachmaninoff at 150

Prelude in C-Sharp Minor, op. 3, no. 2

Bach/Rachmaninoff Violin Partita No. 3 in E Major
Prelude, Gavotte, Gigue

Tchaikovsky/Rachmaninoff *Lullaby*, op. 16, no. 1

Prelude in G Major, op. 32, no. 5

Prelude in G Minor, op. 23, no. 5

Rachmaninoff/Kocsis *Vocalise*, op. 34, no. 14

Polka de W. R.

— Intermission —

9 Etudes-Tableaux, op. 39

Allegro agitato
Lento assai
Allegro molto
Allegro assai
Appassionato
Allegro
Lento lugubre
Allegro moderato
Allegro moderato. Tempo di marcia

Program 5

All Chopin

Variations on "*Là ci darem la mano*", op. 2

Berceuse in D-Flat Major, op. 57

Barcarolle in F-Sharp Major, op. 60

Polonaise "*Héroïque*" in A-Flat Major, op. 53

— Intermission —

Nocturne in C-Sharp Minor, op. Posthumous

Nocturne in E-Flat Major, op. 55, no. 2

Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor, op. 58

About Ching-Yun

A "first-class talent" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*) possessing a "superstar quality — musical, energetic, and full of flair" (*Jerusalem Post*), Taiwanese American pianist **Ching-Yun** has been praised by audiences and critics across the globe for her dazzling virtuosity, captivating musicianship, and magnetic stage presence.

At the heart of Ching-Yun's success is a story of strength, dedication, and resilience that has powered her dream of becoming a world-class artist. Moving to the United States from Taiwan at age 14 without her parents to begin studies at The Juilliard School was the first of many challenges Ching-Yun has overcome in building her illustrious career — one that's included winning top prizes at the **12th Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Competition** and the **Concert Artists Guild Competition**, performing on classical music's biggest stages, and fostering the next generation of musicians as an educator and through entrepreneurial and philanthropic initiatives.

As a soloist, Ching-Yun has astounded audiences across the U.S., Europe, and Asia, performing sold-out concerts at many of the world's most prestigious venues — including **Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, Wigmore Hall, the Concertgebouw, Taipei National Concert Hall, and Osaka's Symphony Hall**. Concerto engagements have included performances with the **Philadelphia Orchestra, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, and Taiwan Philharmonic**.

With a dedication to making classical music more accessible, Ching-Yun presents captivating programs that tell human stories inclusive of gender and race. By juxtaposing audience favorites with underperformed treasures and newly commissioned works, Ching-Yun's recitals consistently offer musical and narrative contrasts that encourage people to listen deeply and discover anew the work of even the most well-known composers.

An [active recording artist](#), her debut album on ArchiMusic, **Ching-Yun Hu Plays Chopin**, was named Best Classical Album of the Year by Taiwan's prestigious Golden Melody Award, and recordings released on CAG Records/Naxos and BMoP Sound have received overwhelming critical acclaim. Her latest album, **Ching-Yun Hu: Rachmaninoff**, released on Centaur/Naxos in 2019, received a five-star review by the U.K.'s *Pianist* magazine, which called the album "essential listening for Rachmaninoff admirers."

Ching-Yun is the founder of two piano festivals across two continents: the **Yun-Hsiang International Music Festival** in Taipei and the [Philadelphia Young Pianists' Academy](#) (PYPA). Now in its 11th year, PYPA has become an important fixture in the classical music world, providing opportunities for young pianists to achieve their dreams of becoming professional musicians while cultivating a deeper appreciation for classical music and serving as a bridge of cultural partnerships between West and East. PYPA's annual programs include intensive master classes, festival concerts, a yearlong artist-development program, and a faculty composed of internationally celebrated pianists — including Gary Graffman, Simone Dinnerstein, Dang Thai Son, Ursula Oppens, and Jerome Lowenthal.

A tireless advocate for music education, Ching-Yun **raised \$27,000 for youth education charities** through a [Hope Charity Concert](#) live-streamed on her Facebook page in June 2020. The all-Liszt program, featuring some of the composer's most moving transcriptions of German lieder, reached more than 140,000 people across the globe.

A **Steinway Artist** since 2018, Ching-Yun serves as **artist in residence and piano faculty at Temple University** in Philadelphia, in addition to her busy schedule leading master classes and artist residencies at universities and music festivals worldwide. She holds degrees from The Juilliard School, Cleveland Institute of Music, and Germany's Hanover University of Music, Drama, and Media, where she studied with Herbert Stessin, Sergei Babayan, and Karl-Heinz Kammerling, respectively.

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Get in Touch

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