



# Benjamin Beilman, violin Steven Osborne, piano

MARCH 7, 2025 | 7:30PM

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We should take a moment to acknowledge the land on which we are gathered. For thousands of years, this land has been the home of Patwin people.

Today, there are three federally recognized Patwin tribes: Cachil DeHe Band of Wintun Indians of the Colusa Indian Community, Kletsel Dehe Wintun Nation, and Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation.

The Patwin people have remained committed to the stewardship of this land over many centuries. It has been cherished and protected, as elders have instructed the young through generations. We are honored and grateful to be here today on their traditional lands.

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## ***A Trip Around the World***

In the Mondavi Center's backstage hallway, just outside the Williams Green Room, there is a map of the world. It's filled with pins, placed there to recognize and honor the home countries of our visiting artists. Every continent except Antarctica has been tagged. Only a few countries and territories do not have a pin.



It's a treat to watch visiting artists and other guests exploring the map. I love to see their excitement when a new pin is placed, or when they realize others from their home country have graced our stages. The map, which started as a simple idea (almost a joke, really), now tells the story of how the arts are a tie that binds all humanity.

As I look ahead at our season, I'm excited and proud of the global reach of our lineup and the promise of some new pins in the map. From January through May, we will present artists from the United States, Brazil, South Korea, England, Guinea, India, Ireland, Japan, France, Australia, and Ukraine.

Some of our most interesting international visitors will focus on the fascinating intersection between western classical arts traditions and the artist's own culture. Heloísa Fernandes will focus on jazz and its Brazilian heritage. Bereishit Dance Company will present modern dance informed by traditional Korean Culture. And the gravity-defying acrobats of Cirque Kalabanté will explore the rhythms of Guinean daily life (just to name a few).

I encourage you to explore this season's many international offerings, and to consider trying something entirely new to you. You'll be glad you did.



The world awaits,  
**Jeremy Ganter**  
*Executive Director*

# Benjamin Beilman, violin Steven Osborne, piano

## PROGRAM

Three Romances, Op. 22

*Andante Molto*

*Allegretto*

*Leidenschaftlich schnell*

Clara Schumann

(1819-1896)

Violin Sonata in G Major, Op. 78

*Vivace ma non troppo*

*Adagio*

*Allegro molto moderato*

Johannes Brahms

(1833-1897)

## INTERMISSION

Two Pieces for Violin and Piano

*Nocturne*

*Cortège*

Lili Boulanger

(1893-1918)

Violin Sonata in A Major

*Allegretto ben moderato*

*Allegro*

*Ben moderato: Recitativo-Fantasia*

*Allegretto poco mosso*

César Franck

(1822-1890)

\*PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE\*

# Program Notes

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## Three Romances, Op. 22 (1853)

CLARA SCHUMANN

**Born in Leipzig, Germany, September 13, 1819;  
died in Frankfurt, Germany, May 20, 1896**

For years, Clara Schumann's gifts were overlooked in the historical record in favor of her husband Robert. Indeed, Clara herself internalized the misogyny of her time once writing "A woman must not desire to compose - there has never yet been one able to do it. Should I expect to be the one?" Ironically blind words for a woman who was already a respected and published composer.

Her father, Friedrich Wieck, was a piano teacher interested in furthering his position through manufacturing a child prodigy. Clara had her first public performance at nine, and by her late teen years she established herself as an international piano virtuoso. She met her future husband when Robert Schuman moved in with the family to study piano with her Wieck. When the young couple expressed their wish to marry, her father couldn't stand losing control of his brilliant daughter to his piano student, whom he viewed as a second-rate talent. Clara went to court and, after an acrimonious legal battle, married Robert.

They had a loving and artistically fulfilling marriage. Robert composed and wrote music criticism while Clara continued to perform. Although Clara was the breadwinner for the family, she evaluated Robert's composing as more important than her musical activities. However, their union was overshadowed by Robert's mental instability. Robert had a mental breakdown in 1854 and spent the last two years of his life in an institution. For reasons unclear to scholars, Clara stopped composing after her husband's death.

This set of three romances for violin and piano was dedicated to the violinist Joseph Joachim. Joachim and Clara toured together and played these pieces for King George V of Hanover, who enjoyed them immensely, calling them a "marvelous, heavenly pleasure." The violin and piano play as equals in these duets, trading melodies back and forth. The first movement tucks pathos into a small package with lyrical and tender melodies. The second movement begins in minor, contrasted with a playful major-mode middle section before ending with a charming pizzicato flourish. Clara took the opportunity to showcase her talents at the piano in the final movement with tricky harp-like arpeggios

in the piano. The main theme is developed in a variety of ways, including a staccato and a pizzicato rendition before the final iteration is heard in the low register.

## Brahms Violin Sonata in G Major, Op. 78 (1879)

JOHANNES BRAHMS

**Born in Hamburg, Germany, May 7, 1833;  
died in Vienna, Austria, April 3, 1897**

Brahms received his first musical instruction on the piano from his father, who quickly passed him on to more advanced teachers when it became apparent that Brahms was talented. He performed on both piano and violin and composed, although his parents and teachers believed he had a better chance at financial success as a performer. (Modern listeners can be happy that he did not listen too closely to his teachers!)

During a concert tour with the Hungarian violinist Ede Remenyi, Brahms played some of his compositions for the violinist Joseph Joachim who was impressed. Joachim introduced Brahms to the composer and music critic Robert Schuman and his wife Clara. This was a life-changing event for Brahms, personally and professionally. Brahms developed a close personal relationship with the Schumanns, which continued after Robert's death. He viewed Clara as an ideal woman and was likely in love with her, although she remained devoted to her deceased husband.

Robert's praise of Brahms' music drew attention to his compositions, although it also exacerbated Brahms' paralyzing self-critical tendencies. Brahms greatly respected the composers who came before him and both sought and dreaded comparisons with earlier masters. Part of his genius was his ability to balance the traditions of the past with innovative new ideas. However, achieving this balance was difficult, and some of his contemporaries found him old-fashioned compared to artists such as Wagner and Liszt.

This sonata is also known as the Regensonata (Rain Sonata) because it uses the theme from his song "Regenleid" (rain song). The music begins with a noble main theme containing a prominent dotted rhythm, which will appear in all movements. The violin frequently takes the lead in this sonata. Still, it is balanced by the piano which also gets chances to shine like in the middle of the first movement where the violin plays soft pizzicato chords while the piano takes over the melody. In the second movement, a peaceful

piano introduction gives way to a dark and serious interior, although the light wins out in the end. Usually, a sonata would have four movements, but this one only has three. The last movement is a rondo which weaves in melodies from the other movements to create a unified work.

## Two Pieces for Violin and Piano (1911,1914)

LILI BOULANGER

**Born in Paris, France, August 21, 1893;**

**died in Mézy, France, March 15, 1918**

Lili Boulanger is one of the better-known female composers of the twentieth century despite her death at a young age. Her works are steeped in French impressionism and full of inventive uses of color. She came from a musical family. Her paternal grandparents were professional musicians and her father was a composer. The family was embedded in the musical life of Paris; the composer Gabriel Fauré was a frequent dinner guest. Recognized as a prodigy when she was two years old, Lili was allowed to accompany her older sister, Nadia (also a prodigy) during her music lessons at the Paris Conservatory when Lili was five and Nadia was 10. Her sister Nadia was potentially more influential on twentieth-century music than Lili as she was a composition teacher who shaped the music of Aaron Copland, Phillip Glass, Leonard Bernstein, Elliot Cart, Astor Piazzolla and Daniel Barenboim.

She was physically fragile and suffered from chronic health conditions and frequent infections. Due to her poor health, she was unable to enroll in formal musical study full-time like her sister and was instead tutored privately. The ultimate prize for young French artists was the Prix de Rome. Originally an award for painters, the prize was extended to musicians in 1803. The winner would receive a scholarship to study in Rome. Lili was awarded the prize on her second attempt in 1913 with her cantata *Faust et Hélène*, becoming the first woman to win. Her scholarship trip to Paris was interrupted by the outbreak of World War I. She returned to Rome in 1916 but was again forced to leave early, this time due to her deteriorating health. When she died in 1918 of intestinal tuberculosis she left many compositions unfinished, including the opera *La princesse Maleine*.

*Nocturne* and *Cortége* were not composed as a set; *Nocturne* was written in 1911, and *Cortége* in 1914. They were paired together by Lili's sister Nadia the first time the pieces were recorded, and ever since then, they have been published, recorded and performed as a set. The short *Nocturne* evokes a dreamy night. A gentle beginning

lulls the listener, although the middle section has more passion than is typical in a lullaby. The ending softly fades away into the night. *Cortége* can mean either a march or a funeral procession, and for this composition, Lili chose a light-hearted parade. The motion and fun of this piece is enhanced by changes in dynamics and the interplay between the instruments.

## Violin Sonata in A Major (1886)

CÉSAR FRANCK

**Born in Liège, Belgium, December 10, 1822;**

**died in Paris, France, November 8, 1890**

The Violin Sonata in A is one of Franck's most popular works and is considered a standout of the genre. This sonata was composed when Franck was in his fifties, the decade when he matured as a composer after being known as a keyboard virtuoso for most of his life. Born in Belgium, Franck's talent at the piano was recognized at an early age. Franck's father was quick to capitalize on his son's talents. After concertizing in Belgium, he went to Paris to continue studying the piano and the organ and receive instruction in composition. Heavy family pressure to perform limited his time composing, and his father convinced him to leave the conservatory early to make money for the family.

Following a series of disappointing concerts in both Belgium and France, Franck retired from the stage. He married against his parent's wishes and in doing so finally got out from under the thumb of his father. In Paris he took a series of increasingly prestigious church organist positions, which drew audiences due to his skilled improvisations. In addition to working as an organist, he taught, proving to be a gifted teacher with exceptionally loyal students. Somewhat unexpectedly, he advanced to the position of organ teacher at the Paris Conservatory in 1872. This stimulating atmosphere brought out the best of his compositional potential. He composed his best works in the final two decades of his life, including the Violin Sonata in A.

The violin sonata was a wedding gift for the Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe. It is a fitting wedding gift as even when their melodies are tumultuous, the two instruments sing together. In the first movement, the violin and the piano blend seamlessly. Franck's thorough development of the melodic material is effortless and natural. The second movement is more tumultuous, with a length and depth that make the first movement feel more like an introduction. The third movement is the sonata's slow movement. It begins with a strong statement from the piano and a cadenza-like entrance from the violin before

the rest of the movement unfolds with freedom and expression. The final movement features a canon between the two instruments. More optimistic and less conflicted than the preceding material, the sonata thunders to a joyous conclusion.

-ELIZABETH CAMPBELL was recently awarded a Ph.D. in musicology from University of California, Davis. She graduated from Indiana University in 2017 with master's degrees in musicology and library science after completing a bachelor's degree in music at Luther College in 2014. Her dissertation work was on Lillian Evanti (1890-1967), an African American opera singer who performed in Europe, the United States, and Latin America.

## Artist Bios

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### Benjamin Beilman, Violin

Benjamin Beilman is one of the leading violinists of his generation. He has won international praise for his passionate performances and deep rich tone which *The New York Times* described as “muscular with a glint of violence,” and the *Strad* described as “pure poetry.” *Le Monde* has described him as “a prodigious artist, who combines the gift of utmost sound perfection and a deep, delicate, intense, simmering sensitivity.”

Benjamin's 2024/25 season includes his debut with the Berlin Philharmonic and Kirill Petrenko on tour in the US, as well as returns to the Chicago Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony and Antwerp Symphony. He also makes his debut with the Belgian National Orchestra in a performance of Stravinsky's concerto, and with the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony performing Korngold. In the US, he also embarks on a recital tour with pianist Steven Osborne.

Last season included Benjamin's subscription debut with the Chicago Symphony with Semyon Bychkov, and six

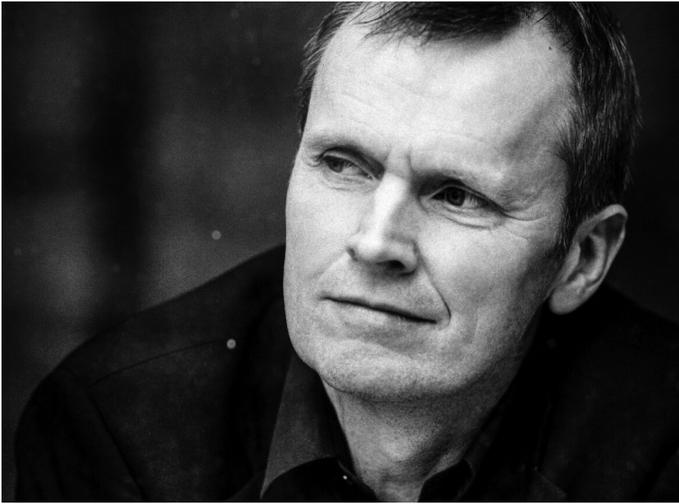
weeks of performances in Europe, including concerts with the SWR Symphonieorchester Stuttgart alongside Elim Chan, a return to the Kölner Philharmonie with the Deutsche Radio Philharmonie Saarbrücken, and appearances at the Grafenegg Festival, Festpielhaus St. Pölten and the Musikverein in Vienna with the Tonkünstler Orchester and Tabita Berglund. He also returned to play-direct the London Chamber Orchestra, and re-united with Ryan Bancroft for his debut with BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Meanwhile, performances in the US included his debut with the St. Louis Symphony under Cristian Macelaru, as well as returns to the Minnesota Orchestra with Elim Chan.

In past seasons, Benjamin has performed with many major orchestras worldwide including the Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Rotterdam Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, Trondheim Symphony, Oslo Philharmonic, Taipei Symphony, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Zurich Tonhalle, Sydney Symphony and Houston Symphony. He has also extensively toured Australia in recital under Musica Aviva, and in 2022, became one of the youngest artists to be appointed to the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music.

In recent seasons Beilman's commitment to and passion for contemporary music has led to new works written for him by Frederic Rzewski (commissioned by Music Accord), and Gabriella Smith (commissioned by the Schubert Club in St. Paul, and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music). He has also given multiple performances of Jennifer Higdon's violin concerto, and recorded Thomas Larcher's concerto with Hannu Lintu and the Tonkünstler Orchester, as well as premiered Chris Rogerson's Violin Concerto (“The Little Prince”) with the Kansas City Symphony and Gemma New.

Conductors with whom he works include Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Cristian Măcelaru, Lahav Shani, Krzysztof Urbanski, Ryan Bancroft, Matthias Pintscher, Gemma New, Karina Canellakis, Jonathon Heyward, Juraj Valčuha, Han-Na Chang, Elim Chan, Roderick Cox, Rafael Payare, Osmo Vänskä and Giancarlo Guerrero.

Beilman studied at the Curtis Institute of Music with Ida Kavafian and Pamela Frank, and with Christian Tetzlaff at the Kronberg Academy, and has received many prestigious accolades including a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship, an Avery Fisher Career Grant and a London Music Masters Award. He has also recorded works by Stravinsky, Janáček and Schubert for Warner Classics. He performs with the ex-Balaković F.X. Tourte bow (c. 1820), and plays the “Ysaÿe” Guarneri del Gesù from 1740, generously on loan from the Nippon Music Foundation.



## Steven Osborne, Piano

“Osborne’s sensitivity, buoyancy and sheer range of subtle colors ensured the piece delivered a hefty emotional wallop” — *The Scotsman*

Steven Osborne’s musical insight and integrity underpin idiomatic interpretations of varied repertoire that have won him fans around the world. The extent of his range is demonstrated by his 41 recordings for Hyperion, which have earned numerous awards, and he was made OBE for his services to music in the Queen’s New Year Honours in 2022.

A thoughtful and curious musician, he has served as Artist-in-Residence at Wigmore Hall and Bath International Music Festival, and is often invited to curate festivals, including at Antwerp’s DeSingel and for Antwerp Symphony Orchestra. The Observer described him as ‘a player in absolute service to the composer.’

Osborne is a regular visitor to the BBC Proms, having performed there 15 times. In 2024, he gave two concerts in the same week, the first in Messiaen’s *Turangalila-Symphonie* with the BBC Philharmonic under Nicholas Collon, with whom he performs it later in the season with Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra. He then performed Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue* with the Sinfonia of London.

He has a lifelong interest in jazz and often improvises in concerts, bringing this spontaneity and freedom to all his interpretations and performing his own transcriptions as encores. This season, he tours the US with a recital program that includes his own jazz transcriptions and improvisations. Other performances in the 2024-25 season include Ryan Wigglesworth’s *Piano Concerto*, with the composer conducting Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra, Britten with Deutsche Radio Philharmonie, Grieg with the

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and a recital at the Aspen Festival. He also tours the US in a duo with violinist Benjamin Beilman.

Osborne has performed in the world’s most prestigious venues, including the Wiener Konzerthaus, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Berlin Philharmonie, Hamburg Elbphilharmonie, Suntory Hall and Kennedy Center Washington, and is a regular guest at both Lincoln Center and Wigmore Hall.

He has worked with major orchestras around the globe, most recently Czech Philharmonic/Bychkov, Israel Philharmonic/Petrenko, Dresden Philharmonic/Runnicles, Seattle Symphony and Philharmonia/Rouvali, Deutsches Symphonie Orchester Berlin, Oslo Philharmonic, London Symphony, Yomiuri Nippon Symphony and Seattle Symphony.

He has been a Hyperion recording artist since 1998, with releases spanning Beethoven, Schubert, Ravel, Liszt, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Rachmaninov, Medtner, Messiaen, Britten, Tippett, Crumb and Feldman, and winning numerous awards around the world. His most recent addition, at the end of 2023, was Debussy’s *Études* and *Pour le piano*, given five stars by BBC Music Magazine and described as ‘full of superlatives.’ In 2024 he returns to the studio with Paul Lewis to record two-piano repertoire by Schubert, Schumann and Brahms.

Osborne was born in Scotland and studied at St Mary’s Music School in Edinburgh and the Royal Northern College of Music. He is Visiting Professor at the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Patron of both the Scottish International Piano Competition and the Lammermuir Festival, and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 2014.

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