

Western Early Keyboard Association
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A Springtime Salon with Anastasia Chin, Fortepiano

Saturday, March 15, 2025, 2:00pm

St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church, Portland Oregon

YouTube premiere, Saturday, March 29, 2pm - @westernearlykeyboardassoc

Program

Sonata in E-flat Major

Marianna Auenbrugger (1759–1782)

Moderato

Largo

Rondo Allegro

Bagatelles, Op. 33

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

No. 1 in E-flat Major

No. 4 in A Major

No. 5 in C Major

No. 6 in D Major

Intermission

Fantaisie in g minor

Hélène de Montgeroult (1764–1836)

Sonata in B-flat Major, K. 570

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Allegro

Adagio

Allegretto

Hands-On Exporation

After the recital, piano teachers, students, and newcomers are welcome to come forward and explore the fortepiano, assisted by Carol lei Breckenridge!

Thank you to Carol lei Breckenridge for loan of the fortepiano, a copy of the 1789 Dulcken piano at the Smithsonian, built in 1976 by Thomas and Barbara Wolf, recently repinned and restrung by Paul Irvin with Stephen Birkett's historical wire.

UPCOMING HARPSICHORD EVENT: Saturday, May 3, 2025, 2:00 pm

Joyce Lindorff performs Bach's French Overture and music from George Washington's Mount Vernon, followed by a fascinating talk about her Mount Vernon research into the harpsichord and music of Martha's granddaughter, Nelly Custis.

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About the Performer

Top prize winner *ex aequo* of the Ninth Mae and Irving Jurow International Harpsichord Competition 2021, fortepianist and harpsichordist **Anastasia Chin** has been praised for her naturally sensitive, elegant and eloquent performances. She is in frequent demand as soloist, chamber musician, and continuo player on the harpsichord, fortepiano and organ. She was one of three finalists in the 2018 Berkeley Festival International Early Piano Competition. Anastasia is a regular performer on the Bloomington Bach Cantata Project series and the Bloomington Early Music Festival, and also plays regularly with Tonos del Sur, an ensemble specializing in 17th and 18th century Latin American music. Recent engagements include Handel's *Messiah* with the Oregon Symphony (December 2023), J.S. Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 with the Indiana University Historical Performance Institute for the Madison Performing Arts Foundation (May 2024), J.S. Bach's concerti for two and four harpsichords with Seven Hills Baroque (July 2024), concerts with Tonos Del Sur at Notre Dame de Chicago as part of the University of Illinois Chicago Latin American Baroque Music Festival (April 2024) and in Bloomington for the Bloomington Early Music Festival (2022 and 2023), and guest recitals and lecture-recitals at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music in Singapore (2023 and 2024).

Anastasia holds a Doctor of Music in Early Music (Keyboard) from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, where she also received her Master of Music in Early Music (Fortepiano) and a Performer Diploma in Harpsichord. Her mentor is eminent harpsichordist and fortepianist Elisabeth Wright, whom she credits for igniting her passion for early music. Anastasia also holds a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, Singapore, where she studied with renowned pianist Albert Tiu. Her full scholarship for undergraduate studies was sponsored by the Singapore National Arts Council.

A Brief History of the Fortepiano

The first fortepiano action, in which strings are struck by hammers, was invented by Bartolomeo Cristofori around 1700, and fitted into a harpsichord case. He called the instrument, *Gravicembalo col piano e forte*, a "harpsichord with soft and loud," achieved via finger pressure. The young instrument became popular after about 1750. The sound of the early fortepiano is lighter and more transparent than that of the modern piano, and appropriate for late Baroque as well as Classical music. Over time, the instrument gained new qualities of tone, volume, size, weight, and range in response to changes in musical style, and was later called *pianoforte*. Two types of action were common: the lighter Viennese action with a brighter tone, preferred by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert (the type of action in the fortepiano used for this recital); and the heavier English action based on Cristofori's, with a more mellow, deep tone. The latter persisted in the modern piano which had evolved by about 1880, complete with heavy construction, metal frame, and wound strings under great pressure. The earlier fortepiano models fell out of use; they are now reconstructed by modern builders, as are the harpsichord and clavichord.

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Program Notes

No more shall winter's veil be spread,
Or clouds deform the tranquil sky,
Again shall spring her treasure shed,
To charm the sense, and please the eye.
To future ages shall the muses sing,
Hail, genial goddess, of the blooming spring.
Thou youthful season of the year,
Whose joys can banish every smart,
Clad in thy vernal sweets appear,
To soften and inspire the heart,
To future ages shall the muses sing,
Hail, genial Goddess, of the blooming spring.

Ode to Spring, Mary Robinson (1757–1800),
stanzas 1–2

I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.
To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Lines Written in Early Spring, William Wordsworth
(1770–1850), stanzas 1–2

Spring is seen as the season of youth and new beginnings. It is fresh and vibrant, flowers and animals gradually emerge from the thawing ground, and longer days disperse the deep chill of winter. It is the season of hope and love, but it is also the season of spring rains and dramatic storms. For some, the newness of everything in spring brings feelings of nostalgia or melancholy as it is a reminder of the transient nature of life. The music chosen for this program reflects the emotions associated with spring.

Marianna Auenbrugger was a gifted pianist and composer whose life was cut short in its spring. The daughter of a prominent Austrian physician who loved music, Marianna was a student of Antonio Salieri. Marianna and her sister Katharina were also the dedicatees of Joseph Haydn's set of six keyboard sonatas (Hob. XVI:20, 35–39). When Marianna died aged 23, Salieri published her only surviving keyboard sonata together with his funeral ode, *De si piacevoli*. The inscription on the cover page read:

Sonata per il clavicembalo o forte piano dalla illustre damigella Marianna d'Auenbrugger, primo et ultimo di Lei prodotto, con Ode d'un amico & ammiratore delle di Lei rare virtùdi, Messa in Musica dal di Lei Maestro di Contra Punto, il signore Anton Salieri. ("Sonata for the harpsichord or fortepiano by the illustrious young lady Marianna d'Auenbrugger, first and last of her work, with an Ode from a friend and admirer of her rare virtues, Mass in Music by her counterpoint teacher, Mr. Antonio Salieri.")

The **Sonata in E-flat major** opens with an exuberant and joyful first movement, followed by a lyrical and heartfelt middle movement, and ending with a boisterous *scherzando* final Rondo.

The **Op. 33 bagatelles** belong to Beethoven's early period. Characterized by clear symmetry and transparent musical textures, they nevertheless feature lyrical writing that foreshadow his later styles. No. 1 in E-flat major has a pastoral lilt, with an increasingly decorated melody as the piece progresses. The simple but luminous melody of No. 4 in A major has an innocence and sweet naivety that is befitting of youth and spring, while No. 5 in C major is a scherzo in all but name: playful arpeggios and triplets cascade across the keyboard while unexpected accents tease listeners with exuberant displays of joy and virtuosity that at times seem more Muzio Clementi than Beethoven. No. 6 in D major has the indication *Con una certa espressione parlante* ("with a certain speaking expression") and is rhetorically striking in its conversational character, alternating between different registers of the keyboard.

Hélène de Montgeroult bridges the Classical and Romantic eras. Born in Lyon into a titled noble family, de Montgeroult was an accomplished performer, conservatoire teacher and composer. Her musical talents allowed her to escape exile during the Reign of Terror and remain in Paris, and it may have also saved her from the guillotine, according to varying accounts from the second half of the 19th century (these have neither been confirmed nor disputed). The Marquise hosted musical salons, where her guests and friends included Viotti, Cherubini, Kreutzer and Moscheles among others. The *Fantaisie* in G minor is stormy, dramatic and lyrical, consisting of highly contrasting sections which run the gamut of moods. Musically turbulent and virtuosic sections alternate with wistful and nostalgic lyricism to create a work that is undeniably Romantic in character but Classical in its relatively lean textures.

Mozart's Sonata in B-flat major, K. 570 closes this program with lyricism, charm and wit. Perhaps less "flashy" than some of his other piano sonatas, the work exudes a paradoxical sense of both capriciousness and lucid contentment in the first movement, an expressive and poignant second movement, and effervescent humor in the last movement that evokes scenes from his comic operas.

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