



Smithsonian Associates

Great Composer-Pianists: Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, and Brahms

Dr. Rachel Franklin

Wednesday, May 11, 2022 - 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. ET

Popular speaker and concert pianist **Rachel Franklin** guides a unique look at the monumental keyboard talents of four great composer-pianists and how their performing virtuosity influenced the piano works we enjoy today.

With a legacy of printed compositions but no recordings, how can we get closer to the white-hot moments of creation and performance when these artists poured out their genius for fortunate and astonished listeners? How did the composers' musical imaginations and their signature performance styles influence the development of how pianos would be constructed and sound? And did their contemporary audiences even comprehend what they were hearing?

Franklin offers fascinating exploration into the creative minds—and hands—of a quartet of piano pioneers celebrated for their prowess as composers and performers. She concludes each lecture with a live performance of a work by the spotlighted composer.

British-born Franklin has been a featured speaker for organizations including the Library of Congress and NPR, exploring intersections among classical and jazz music, film scores, and the fine arts.

WK 1. SYLLABUS & WORKS

May 11th: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, 1756-1791

“Kapellmeister Mozart’s...The hour of music I heard there was the happiest ever granted me. This little man and great master improvised twice...so wonderfully! so wonderfully! that I did not know where I was....He wove together the most difficult passages and the most ingratiating themes...” **Joachim Preisler**

Mozart’s playing was regarded as simply wondrous. We examine his beginnings as a harpsichord and clavichord player, his brilliance as an improviser and creator of instant cadenzas, and how he subsequently pivoted directly to the recently developed pianofortes, creating new concerto and chamber music styles that both dazzled and confused his audiences.

Works explored, media used:

Introducing Mozart’s Fortepiano: Steven Devine, Principal Keyboard,
Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ef95BZfYcw>

Robert Levin discusses Mozart’s Fortepiano

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XA44wda3prE&t=18s>

Mozart's works:

Keyboard sonata in C, K. 545

- Alexei Lubimov, fortepiano

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCCvA-GRRxk>

- Wim Winters, clavichord

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmBGXm6Gt24>

Harpsichord and violin sonata in D, K. 7

- Anna Kislitsyna & Alexandr Kislitsyn

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbWRsLRIUVs>

Twelve Variations on "Ah vous dirai-je, Maman", K. 265

- Wim Winters

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OosUrP7lptg>

Keyboard sonata in F, K. 332

Piano quartet in G minor, K. 478

- Alina Pogostkina, Violine / Veronika Hagen, Viola / Mischa Meyer, Cello
/ Jérôme Ducros, Piano

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpK1tjbeeA0&t=42s>

Johann Christian Bach (1735-1782) Sextet in C major, W. B78

- Il Gardellino

Keyboard concerto no. 9 in E flat, K. 271, the “Jeunehomme.”

- Murray Perahia, English Chamber Orchestra

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6D_IJivZ-8

Keyboard concerto no. 23 in A major, K. 488

- Robert Levin, Academy of Ancient Music, Christopher Hogwood

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pwbq37Ha64>

Keyboard concerto no. 20 in D minor, K. 466

Fantasia in C minor, K. 475