



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

Dr. Rachel Franklin

Monday, March 10, 2025 - 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 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.

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:

Keyboard sonata in C, K. 545, 1788

- 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, 1764

- Anna Kislitsyna & Alexandr Kislitsyn
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbWRsLRIUVs>

Kristian Bezuidenhout explains the fortepiano

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2JqEKncsyM>

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

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

Keyboard concerto no. 9 in E flat, K. 271, the "Jeunehomme.", 1777

- Murray Perahia, English Chamber Orchestra
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6D_IJivZ-8

Piano and violin sonata, No. 21, E Minor, K. 304, 1778

- Ingrid Haebler, piano, Henryk Szeryng, violin
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UhnfWzOCMo>

Piano sonata in A, K. 331, 1783

- Maria João Pires
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHS33DHJQFU>

Concerto for two Fortepianos, K. 365, 1779

- Daniel Barenboim, Vladimir Ashkenazy, English Chamber Orchestra
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9njzsnFwFxA>

Robert Levin discusses Mozart's Fortepiano

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

Sonata for two pianos, K. 448, 1781

- Malcolm Frager, Robert Levin
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiHZsreNqfg>

Wind quintet in E flat, K. 452, 1784

- Cambini Winds, Owen Watkins, clarinet Geoffrey Burgess, oboe Marc Vallon, bassoon Todd Williams, horn, Penelope Crawford, fortepiano
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQ_z_tMK6Bo

Robert Levin discusses Mozartian improvisation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uGRdXeH7blc>

Concerto in G, No. 17, K. 453, 1784

- Olga Pashchenko, Il Gardellino (Fortepiano after Anton Walter, Vienna 1795)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTwX0sM8hrl>

Piano concerto No. 17 in G, K. 453, 1784

- Vladimir Ashkenazy, Philharmonia Orchestra
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLmmhOjKV5s>

Piano and violin sonata in B-Flat Major, K. 454, 1784

- Kit Armstrong, piano, Renaud Capuçon, violin
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qdxhunuuY2E>

Piano quartet in G minor, K. 478, 1785

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

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

Concerto in A, No. 23, K. 488, 1786

- Daniil Trifonov, Israel Camarata, Avner Biron

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-s68kHOnpiE>

Fantasia in C minor, K. 475, 1785