



Smithsonian Associates

## Women Who Shaped the Musical World: Performers, Patrons, Composers, Muses ... and more

*Dr. Rachel Franklin*

Monday, January 12 - February 9, 2026 - 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. ET

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### **Feb. 2nd: Superb Salonnères**

Mendelssohn's great aunt Sara Levy ran her weekly salon to perform the works of J. S. Bach publicly, commissioned new ones from his sons, and built an incalculably valuable library of Bach family manuscripts. The strangely spectral, Italian-born Princess Belgiojoso used her glamorous salon to raise money for her country's political exiles by dreaming up legendary musical events for her adoring musical friends, who included Liszt and Chopin. The powerful connections, commissions, and sponsorships of avantgarde American heiress Winnaretta Singer, aka Princesse Edmond de Polignac, aided in the creation of major works by Fauré, Stravinsky, Poulenc, and others. Nadia Boulanger, the great powerhouse teacher and mentor to many American composers held unmissable sessions at the American Conservatory at Fontainebleau. We also visit with one of Fauré's favorites, Marie Trélat, plus an exceptional Chopin student, Comtesse Therese Apponyi, the fantastically glamorous Comtesse Greffuhle, and the legendary singer, pianist, composer and salonnière Pauline Viardot. Grab your champagne as we drop by the gorgeous homes where great intellects and artists rubbed shoulders, and glorious music was heard.

### **Works explored, media used:**

#### **Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, 1710-1784**

Fantasia in D Minor, F. 19. From the collection of Sara Levy, 1761-1854

- Claudio Astronio

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-UqMDOWmFw>

### **Carl Phillip Emanuel Bach, 1714-1788**

Concerto in E flat for Harpsichord & Fortepiano, Wq 47. 1788. Commissioned and premiered by Sara Levy

- Ars Lyrica Houston. Fortepiano - Mario Aschauer, harpsichord -Matthew Dirst, artistic director  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUZKzJPE7gY&t=255s>

### **Fryderyk Chopin, 1810-1849**

Nocturne in C# minor, Op. 27, No. 1. 1837. Dedicated to Comtesse Therese Apponyi, 1790-1874

- Vladimir Horowitz  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smCWtG4vnPk>

### **Franz Liszt, 1811-1886**

“Hexameron” variations on a theme from Bellini’s “I Puritani” by Liszt, with Chopin, Thalberg, Czerny and others. 1837-39. Dedicated to, commissioned and published by Princesse Cristina Trivulzio Belgiojoso, 1808-1871

- William Wolfram  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yNMgm2wnnyc>

### **Pauline Viardot, 1821- 1910**

“Aimez-moi ma mignonne” 1886

- Françoise Masset, Françoise Tillard playing an 1843 Erard piano  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBRtHtEXHJk>

Havanaise. 1880

- Cecilia Bartoli, Jean-Yves Thibaudet  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YfLi6I4hMgg>

### **Johannes Brahms, 1833-1897**

Alto Rhapsody, op. 53 for alto, male chorus & orchestra. 1869. Dedicated to, premiered by Pauline Viardot

- Nathalie Stutzmann, Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique The Monteverdi Choir John Eliot Gardiner  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wt6mF2MpZBg>

### **Gabriel Fauré, 1845-1924**

“Lydia,” Op. 4, No. 2. 1870. Dedicated to Marie Trélat, 1837-1914

- Ailish Tynan, Iain Burnside  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s8NVVZDdfY4>

Pavane, Op. 50. 1887. Dedicated to Élisabeth, Countess Greffulhe, 1860-1952

- Martina Batic, le Choeur de Radio France, Radio France Orchestra  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-QTEvYP-J0>

### **Nadia Boulanger, 1887-1979**

Aaron Copland on Nadia Boulanger

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzO87\\_ZCmaA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzO87_ZCmaA)

"Nadia Boulanger: Mademoiselle" by Bruno Monsaingeon, excerpt

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfVn8Z97BcI>

Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestra. 1912

- Eric Le Sage, l'Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IfNfY9S3ybw>

Trois Pièces pour violoncelle et piano. 1914

- Bryan Cheng, cello  
Silvie Cheng, piano  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rghjLzI0jcl>

### **Igor Stravinsky, 1882-1971**

“Renard” (The Fox), burlesque tale sung and played for two tenors, two basses and ensemble. 1922.

Commissioned, dedicated to Winnaretta Singer-Polignac, 1865-1943

- Le Balcon Company, Maxime Pascal  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U977r0nntEk>

### **Francis Poulenc, 1899-1963**

Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra. 1932. Commissioned by and dedicated to Winnaretta Singer-Polignac

- Katia and Marielle Labeque  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PORdUzO2JdU>

A number of you have reached out to me asking about my live concert performances. For my upcoming performance of Beethoven's 4<sup>th</sup> piano concerto with the Washington Sinfonietta, please click on this link: <https://washingtonsinfonietta.org/>