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18TH SPRING

Benefit Concert

PROFESSIONAL PIANISTS AND GUESTS
IN A VARIED PROGRAM

FUNDING STUDENT ASSISTANCE AWARDS

**Sunday,
April 14th,
2024
3:00 PM**

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ASHEVILLE AREA PIANO FORUM 18th SPRING BENEFIT CONCERT

Sunday, April 14, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church, 40 Church St., Asheville

with delayed YouTube viewing May 1 - 31

Funding the AAPF Student Assistance Awards

**FEATURING ASHEVILLE AREA PIANO
FORUM MEMBERS AND GUEST ARTISTS**

John Cobb

Leslie Downs

Yelena Saladukha and Nicole Lopez

Andrew Ning

Karen Boyd and Wayne Smith

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Mary Killough in honor of Karen Boyd

master of ceremonies - William Bares

video / audio engineer - Nathan Shirley



18th Spring Benefit Concert

First Presbyterian Church, 40 Church St., Asheville

Sunday, April 14, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.

with delayed YouTube Viewing May 1 - 31

Petrarch Sonnet 104 "*Pace non Trovo*" (1858)

Franz Liszt
1811 - 1886

John Cobb

Quejas o la Maja y el Ruiseñor (*The Maiden
and the Nightengale*) from Goyescas (1910)

Enrique Granados
1867 - 1916

Allegro de Concierto (1903)

Enrique Granados

Leslie Downs

Summer Dreams, Op. 47 (6 pieces) (1901)

Amy Beach
1867 - 1944

Yelena Saladukha and Nicole Lopez

Sonata no. 2 in B-flat Minor, Op. 36 (1931)
I. Allegro Agitato

Sergei Rachmaninoff
1873 - 1943

Andrew Ning

Ma Mère L'oye (Mother Goose Suite) (1910)

Maurice Ravel
1875 - 1937

Karen Boyd and Wayne Smith

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Program Notes and Artist Biographies

submitted by each performer

Franz Liszt: Petrarch Sonnet 104, "Pace non trovo" (1858)

John Cobb

Liszt's *Tre Sonetti del Petrarca* started life as songs set in the baritone range. He received the inspiration for them from Petrarch's Sonnets while travelling in Italy with Marie, Countess d'Agoult, in 1838-39. The songs were reworked as piano solos, eventually appearing in the 1850s in the second volume of the *Années de Pelerinage – Italie*. This sonnet opens with the author's impossible love dilemma: "I find no peace, but for war am not inclined; I fear, yet hope; I burn, yet am turned to ice; I soar in the heavens, but lie upon the ground; I hold nothing, though I embrace the whole world." And as though it were any mystery, the sonnet ends with the following sentence: "and to this state I am come, my lady, because of you."

An international performer and recording artist, **Dr. John Cobb** did post-doctoral study with legendary pianist Claudio Arrau. The *New York Times* praised his "solid technique, bronze tone and flexibility of interpretive style." While completing a Doctor of Music degree at Northwestern University, Dr. Cobb held a fellowship at the University of Chicago, where he pursued doctoral studies in musicology. He performs a broad repertoire of solo and chamber music, was a frequent performer on the Piano Forte series at the Asheville Art Museum and appeared as soloist with the Asheville Symphony, performing the Samuel Barber Piano Concerto. Dr. Cobb frequently serves as an adjudicator for competitions and music festivals.

Enrique Granados: *Quejas o la maja y el ruiseñor (The Maiden and the Nightingale)* from *Goyescas* (1910)

Leslie Downs

One of the most popular and often-played pieces by Granados, this piece is a conversation between a despondent maja and a nightingale. It features repetitions of the main theme in the form of variations. At the end we hear flourishes that represent the nightingale's response to the maja.

Allegro de Concierto (1903)

This work was written for a competition sponsored by the Real Conservatorio in Madrid and was awarded first prize. It is virtuosic in nature, with the bravura moments alternating with lyrical sections.



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Dr. Leslie Downs is active as both a solo and collaborative pianist. He has performed in solo, lieder, chamber and choral concerts throughout the United States and in Canada. A versatile artist, Dr. Downs enjoys playing many styles of music. His affinity for Spanish piano music led to an extensive study of the dances of Spain for his dissertation, *Spanish Dances and the Piano Music of Albéniz, Granados, Falla, Turina, and Mompou*. For 16 years he worked as a freelance pianist/teacher/vocal coach in New York City. He currently serves as the Music Director for the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Asheville and maintains a private teaching studio. He holds degrees from Centenary College of Louisiana, Yale University, and the University of Oklahoma.

Amy Beach: Summer Dreams, Op. 47 (1901)

- No. 1. The Brownies (William Shakespeare) No. 2. Robin Redbreast (Charles Henry Lüders)
No. 3. Twilight (Amy Beach) No. 4. Katy-Dids (Walt Whitman)
No. 5. Elfin Tarantelle (William Shakespeare) No. 6. Goodnight (Agnes Lockhart Hughes)

Yelena Saladukha and Nicole Lopez, piano duet (one piano, four hands)

Amy Beach (1867-1944) is one of our great American pianists and composers. Without European training and with a husband who thought it inappropriate for her to continue to perform as a married woman, she composed piano solo, symphonic, chamber and more works and (after her husband's death) concertized in the US and Germany. She was the first American woman to compose a symphony (*Gaelic Symphony*). Composed in 1901, Beach dedicated *Summer Dreams* to her niece. Each piece is prefaced by an excerpt from a different poem.

Born in Minsk, Belarus, **Yelena Saladukha's** musical journey began at an early age. As her passion for music grew, she decided to further her education in piano performance. Seeking out renowned instructors, Yelena eventually found her way to the University of North Carolina at Asheville, where she had the opportunity to study under the guidance of Dr. Hwa-Jin Kim. Under Dr. Kim's tutelage, Yelena honed her technique, refined her musicality, and expanded her repertoire. While studying, she performed at various local venues, including concert halls, recital rooms, and even community events. Alongside her own performance career, she also pursued a passion for teaching. Recognizing the importance of passing on her knowledge and nurturing the talent of future generations, she began offering piano lessons to aspiring musicians. Yelena derives great joy from watching her students progress and develop their own musical voices.

Nicole Lopez is an avid amateur pianist obsessed with exploring works by systematically neglected composers, like the women and people of color excluded from the classical music canon. She is particularly inspired by Chiquinha Gonzaga, the first woman conductor in Brazil, first pianist of the Brazilian genre Choro, and abolitionist who used her concerts to champion the abolition of slavery in

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Brazil. Nicole tries to be like Chinquinha and focuses her piano performance on raising funds and awareness of liberation struggles. When she's not playing piano, Nicole builds tech for abortion access with Midwest Access Coalition and Techies for Reproductive Justice.

**Sergei Rachmaninoff: Sonata No. 2 in B-flat Minor, Op.36
(1931 version), I. Allegro agitato
Andrew Ning**

The first movement of Rachmaninoff's Sonata No. 2, Op. 36, is a powerful piece in sonata-allegro form. It starts with a dramatic theme featuring a descending arpeggio and a strong B-flat minor chord. The second theme contrasts with a chorale-like texture in D-flat major. The development section is marked by constantly changing key centers. The recapitulation restates the initial theme in B-flat minor, and the ending alternates between major and minor, keeping the tonal resolution uncertain until the coda. Rachmaninoff wasn't satisfied with the piece, leading to a 1931 revision with cuts and simplifications.

Andrew Ning is a sophomore at Riverside High School in Greer, SC. Guided by his teacher, Lisa Kiser, he enjoys participating in piano competitions at regional, state, and national levels. He has taken part in both the solo and concerto categories and has accumulated many achievements throughout his ten-year journey. Some recent achievements are that he was a national finalist in the 2022 Hayes Piano Competition and that he won 1st place in the 2023 SCMTA Auditions (Division III, Solo Category, Piano). Beyond the realm of music, Andrew engages in other interesting activities. He swims competitively, participates in math competitions, and is the president of the Chess Club at his school. Andrew's diverse interests and efforts make him a well-rounded individual, showcasing a balanced blend of musical and non-musical pursuits.

Maurice Ravel: Ma Mère L'Oye (Mother Goose Suite) (1910)

I. *Pavane de la Belle au bois dormant*: Lent (Pavane of Sleeping Beauty)

II. *Petit Poucet*: Très modéré (Little Tom Thumb, Hop-O'-My-Thumb)

III. *Laideronnette, impératrice des pagodes*: Mouvement de marche (Little Ugly Girl,
Empress of the Pagodas)

IV. *Les entretiens de la belle et de la bête*: Mouvement de valse très modéré
(Conversation of Beauty and the Beast)

V. *Le jardin féerique*: Lent et grave (The Fairy Garden)

**Karen Boyd and Wayne Smith, piano duet
(one piano, four hands)**

This suite, published in 1910, is a collection of Ravel's favorite French fairy tales. The title was taken from Charles Perrault's *Contes de ma mère l'oye* (Mother Goose Tales, 1697). The four-hand version is original and there is also an orche-



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tral transcription and a ballet adaptation. Pavane for a Sleeping Beauty is a short, stately dance in Aeolian mode. Tom Thumb is lost in the forest and we hear his confusion and anxiety as he wanders. The Little Plain Girl, Empress of the Porcelain Dolls, using the pentatonic scale on black keys, is about a Chinese princess taking a bath in her garden. Conversations of Beauty and the Beast is the familiar story where the Beast is mystically transformed (glissando) into a handsome prince. The Enchanted Garden is a stately sarabande using pan-diatonic harmonies. The suite ends with a brilliant fanfare of glissandos.

Karen Boyd graduated from the Oberlin Conservatory (B.M.), West Chester University (M.M.), and did post-grad studies at Rutgers University. She is a founding member of AAPF, and is its president for 2023-24. With fifty years of teaching experience, her students have won competitions and many have continued music study at major universities. As a performer Karen played in chamber music ensembles and accompanied many choral groups. She loves playing piano duets and two piano music. Karen is also a member of NCMTA.

Dr. Wayne Smith relocated to Asheville in 2016 after an active musical life in Kansas City, Missouri, as a church musician, performer and teacher. He has served many churches in and around Asheville as a substitute/interim organist and is now the permanent organist at St. James Episcopal Church in Black Mountain. He is an active member of the Asheville Area Piano Forum and served on the board of directors while chairing their annual benefit concerts. He holds the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in piano performance from the University of Maryland, College Park. He has been a piano soloist with orchestras including the Tulsa Philharmonic and the Dallas Symphony. Other performances include a recital at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, and a solo recital for former First Lady, Betty Ford.





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AAPF Activities and Events in 2023-24

Student Assistance Awards: Monetary awards are made to students showing financial need in order to begin or continue private piano study. Two primary sources of funding for the awards are ticket and advertisement sales from the two annual benefit concerts.

Fall and Spring Benefit Concerts: The annual concerts feature AAPF professional pianists in solos and ensembles. Jazz, classical, original and popular piano styles are all included. Sales of concert tickets fund the Student Assistance Awards.

Presentations at General Meetings: Four or five times a year, highly respected musicians give lectures or demonstrations on topics of interest to pianists. AAPF presents these meetings as in-person events and also on Zoom.

Masterclasses and Student Recitals are featured in the Fall and Spring. Students learn the art of performance as they prepare for these recitals which are attended by supportive family and friends. Instruction at a masterclass is made by a teacher who has extensive experience. The class benefits not only the performing students, but everyone in attendance.



Practice for Pets occurs in February to reward good practicing habits for piano students of all ages, and to raise money for the Asheville Humane Society. You can be a piano student sponsor!

The Asheville Piano Competition is for pre-college students who compete at varying levels of difficulty. The judging is both professional and encouraging. Prize money is awarded, and the 1st Place Advanced Level winner is invited to appear in one of the next season's Benefit Concerts.

Outreach Group Piano Classes sponsored by AAPF provide free piano instruction in small class settings that are part of after-school programs, and in larger classes that are part of public school programs. The Piano Forum also provides digital pianos for use by the schools and students.

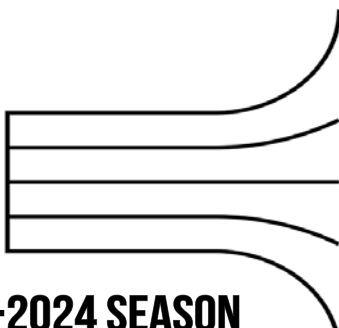
Teacher Roundtable Discussion Groups, held several times a year, allow AAPF member teachers to discuss ideas about teaching piano and to share their teaching experiences.

Amateur and General Performance Groups give opportunities for members to play for one another in informal, social settings at members' homes.

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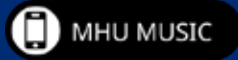


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Asheville Piano Competition 2024

AAPF is grateful to the following sponsors of the 2024 Asheville Piano Competition



Mars Hill University will again host the 2024 Asheville Piano Competition on May 4th with Winners Recital at 3:30 p.m. in Broyhill Chapel.



Longtime sponsors **Christine Nelson** and **Kyle Boyd** of **Beacon Pointe Advisors** continue their competition support.

Dr. L. Adlai and **Ms. Karen Boyd** continue their competition sponsorship this season.

The Donald Shafer Jettas Memorial Award of \$1,000 given to the First Place Winner at the Advanced Level is being made by **James Hilderbrandt**. The prize is to encourage that winner to continue music and piano studies.

We welcome **Dr. O. Wayne Smith** as a new sponsor of the competition in 2024!



The **Eric Anderson Weigel Memorial Fund** was established through the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina to honor his memory through charitable giving. Eric valued the work of the Asheville Area Piano Forum and enjoyed the challenge of the annual competition. Support of the musical arts and young musicians is one of the focus areas of the memorial fund.



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“To provide educational and charitable opportunities for Western North Carolina piano teachers, their students and their communities. To enhance the appreciation of piano and keyboard music, pedagogy, and performance in Western North Carolina.”

— *AAPF Mission Statement*

The Asheville Area Piano Forum (AAPF) is a tax exempt 501 (C)(3) non-profit charitable and educational organization of almost 100 members, most of whom live within a 75 mile radius of Asheville, NC. Information about how to apply for membership, AAPF activities, and how to support the Piano Forum’s mission can be found on the website:
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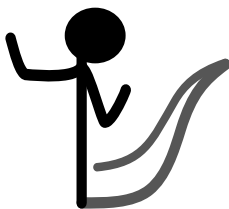
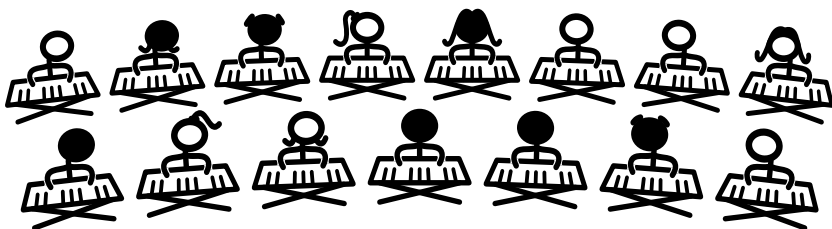
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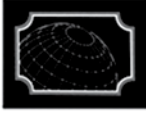
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* Indicates gift dedication to Fall or Spring Benefit Concerts, to Student Assistance including Outreach Group Piano Classes, to the Asheville Piano Competition or to Presentations and Masterclasses.

Many thanks to all our contributors! Please forgive any errors or omissions.

AAPF Spring Concert production team

Dan Angerstein - Advising

William Bares - Concert Committee Chairperson, Organization,
Program Cover Design and Editing

Karen Boyd - Program Updating, Liaison with Sponsors
and Advertisers

Bill Clark - Historian

Mary Holmes - Advising, Memorabilia Table and Reception

Philip Morrison - Website Updates

Dominic Rajagopol - Website Updates

Sue Russell - Publicity and Reception

Marilynn Seits - Bookkeeping, Advertisements and Tickets

Nathan Shirley - Concert Videography

Rich Winslow - Reception

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First Presbyterian Church of Asheville



First Presbyterian Church of Asheville: A community where people of every age, ability, socioeconomic status, family background, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, skin color, and racial identity are invited to seek and experience the love of Jesus Christ by practicing radical hospitality, forming deep relationships, and joining in shared ministry.

Sunday Schedule

8:45 Worship Service in Campbell Chapel

9:45 Faith Formation Classes

11:00 Worship Service in the Sanctuary in person & streamed

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