



PRESENTS

# LANG LANG IN RECITAL

THE **THERESE M. GROJEAN**  
CLASSICAL SERIES

Lang Lang, piano

VILAR PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

This evening's performance is generously supported by  
Classical Series Presenting Underwriters **Alexia & Jerry Jurschak**  
and the **David and Molly Pyott Foundation**

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## PROGRAM

**Mozart**  
1756-1791

Rondo in D major, K. 485

**Beethoven**  
1770-1827

Sonata No. 8 in C minor, Op. 13 (Pathétique)

**Beethoven**  
1770-1827

Sonata No. 31 in A flat major, Op. 110

### *Intermission*

**Albéniz**  
1860-1909

Selections from Suite española, Op. 47

- no. 1 Granada
- no. 2 Cataluña
- no. 3 Sevilla
- no. 4 Cádiz
- no. 5 Asturias
- no. 8 Cuba

**Granados**  
1867-1916

Goyescas, Op. 11 No. 4 Quejas, o La Maja y El Ruiseñor

**Liszt**  
1811-1886

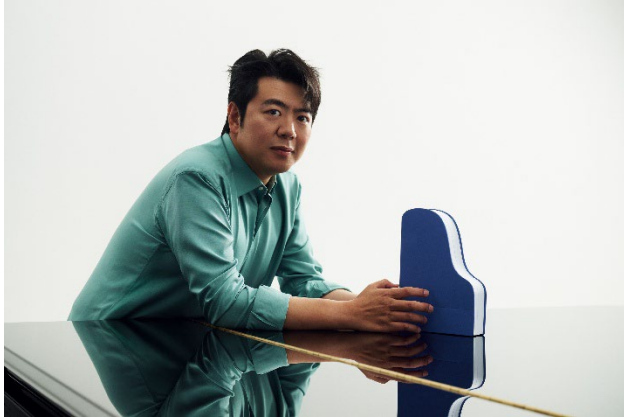
Consolation No. 2 in E Major

**Liszt**  
1811-1886

Venezia e Napoli: III. Tarantella



## ABOUT



Lang Lang is a leading figure in classical music today. As a pianist, educator, and philanthropist, he has become one of the world's most influential and dedicated ambassadors for the arts in the 21st century. Equally at home performing for billions at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Opening Ceremony, the 2024 reopening of Notre-Dame de Paris, and the 2026 Milan Olympic Opening Ceremony, or for just a few hundred children in public schools, he is a master communicator through music.

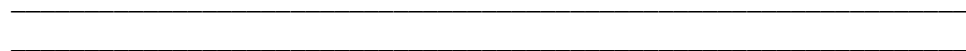
Heralded by the New York Times as "the hottest artist on the classical music planet," Lang Lang plays sold-out concerts all over the world. He has formed ongoing collaborations with conductors including Sir Simon Rattle, Gustavo Dudamel, Daniel Barenboim, and Christoph Eschenbach, and performs with all the world's top orchestras. Lang Lang is known for thinking outside the box and frequently steps into different musical worlds. Millions of viewers watched his performances at the GRAMMY Awards with Metallica, Pharrell Williams, and jazz legend Herbie Hancock.

Lang Lang's passion for innovation has led him to exciting collaborations beyond classical music. He has worked with global pop icons such as Ed Sheeran, John Legend, Rose from BLACKPINK, J Balvin, and Jay Chou bringing classical music to new and diverse audiences. He also collaborated with Disney, blending his classical artistry with the magic of Disney, further expanding his reach.

For about a decade, Lang Lang has contributed to musical education worldwide. In 2008, he founded the Lang Lang International Music Foundation, aimed at cultivating tomorrow's top pianists, championing music education at the forefront of technology, and building a young audience through live music experiences. In 2013, Lang Lang was designated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations as a Messenger of Peace, focusing on global education.

Lang Lang's influence extends into the luxury world, where he is a Global Ambassador for Dior, Hublot, and Hennessy, and has partnered with Alicia Keys for a high-profile campaign with Hennessy. His unique blend of artistry and creativity also led him to design his limited-edition Steinway Black Diamond piano, debut the Steinway Spirio Cast to the world, create his Hublot limited-edition watch, and design the interior of a Bugatti car, etc. These ventures showcase his diverse talents beyond music.

Lang Lang started playing the piano at age three and gave his first public recital before the age of five. At age nine, he entered Beijing's Central Music Conservatory and won First Prize at the International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians at 13. He subsequently went to



Philadelphia to study with legendary pianist Gary Graffman at the Curtis Institute of Music. He was seventeen when his big break came, substituting for André Watts at the Gala of the Century, playing Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Christoph Eschenbach: he became an overnight sensation, and the invitations started to pour in.

Lang Lang's boundless drive to attract new audiences to classical music has brought him tremendous recognition: he was presented with the 2010 Crystal Award in Davos and was picked as one of the 250 Young Global Leaders by the World Economic Forum. He is also the recipient of honorary doctorates from the Royal College of Music, the Manhattan School of Music, and New York University. Lang Lang has received many of the highest civilian honors awarded by countries around the world, including the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China, the Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, and France's Légion d'honneur. In 2016, Lang Lang was invited to the Vatican to perform for Pope Francis. He has also performed for numerous other international dignitaries, including four U.S. presidents and monarchs from many nations.

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## PROGRAM NOTES

### - **Mozart: Rondo in D major, K. 485**

Mozart's own note upon the manuscript attests that he completed the Rondo in D major in Vienna January 10, 1786. At the time, he was working on his opera *The Marriage of Figaro*, which would premiere in a few months. Perhaps the mostly bright spirits of the opera migrated into the piano piece, much of which is audible sunshine. Brief minor key excursions appear for the sake of contrast, but the overall atmosphere is laughter and good humor, with an abundance of nimble runs and trills to add sparkle. Here is a little piece that could bring joy into the cloudiest day.

### - **Beethoven: Sonata no. 8 in c minor, op. 13, "Pathétique"**

Beethoven's Piano Sonata no. 8 (1799) is known as the "Pathétique," a nickname chosen by Beethoven himself. The word is French, in which context it lacks the often disparaging context of the English "pathetic." Rather, it suggests heartfelt sympathy with a tinge of sorrow.

The first movement is less sympathetic than stormy. At first, those storms lurk ominously on the horizon, but before long, they power into the scene. Tumultuous phrases and gentler ones appear in turn, though the tumultuous ones are given more frequent emphasis and broader development. Unusually, Beethoven not only repeats these thematic ideas, but also the ominous introduction, bringing even greater breadth and variety to the music.

Pathos appears with the gentle middle movement. This will be familiar to fans of the Karl Haas radio program *Adventures in Good Music*, for which its opening melody served as theme music. Other tunes of different character also appear. However, the opening melody is heard most frequently, and is perhaps the one that Beethoven judged as having the most potential.

The last of the sonata's three movements also sets various melodies in juxtaposition. Some are anxious, others peaceful. Tension and gentle sighs appear in fairly equal proportion, though disquiet still dominates, even into the final chords. Having begun the sonata's first movement with anxiety, Beethoven chose to end the last movement similarly, bringing the sonata full circle.

- I. Grave – Allegro di molto e con brio
- II. Adagio cantabile
- III. Rondo (Allegro)

### - Beethoven: Piano Sonata no. 31 in A-flat, op. 110

Beethoven's epic series of 32 piano sonatas came to a close in 1822, half a decade before his passing. Perhaps feeling that he had said all there was to say in the field, he never returned to it. The last three of these sonatas bear individual opus numbers. They were not published as a set per se, though in the composer's letters to his publisher, he consistently refers to them collectively. Coming as they do at the end of 25 years' experience with the genre, they benefit from the repertoire of approaches he had developed.

The first movement of the Sonata no. 31 in A-flat major, op. 110, brings a songlike, expressive flavor.

Passages of tenderness are sometimes enlivened with quickly flowing passagework, but never high drama. Beethovenian boldness is waiting in the wings for the brief, brisk second movement *Allegro molto*. Occasional strong statements punctuate the action.

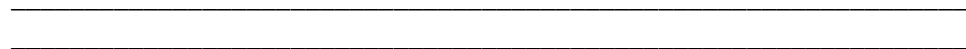
The movement closes peacefully, as if to prepare performer and listener alike for that which follows.

Beethoven envisioned the third and fourth movements as one single sweep of music. He wanted no break between them, other than a single held chord on which the pianist may linger for dramatic effect. First comes the *Adagio, ma non troppo*. Steady chords pace calmly beneath a reserved, almost cautious right hand melody. After reaching that transitional chord, Beethoven changes keys to A-flat major and sets off into the *Allegro, ma non troppo* fugue.

Initially there is a single melody, in this case, a steady, dotted-quarter note figure. Additional melodies appear, juxtaposed against the original theme in a multi-layered fugue. At this point, many composers would have been satisfied. Beethoven, however, wants more. He restarts the fugue, inverting the original theme, so that where it previously rose in pitch it now falls, and vice versa. Although the materials are largely the same, the effect is quite different. In the closing pages, firm right hand chords are matched against racing lines for the left hand. At last, all rises to the final A-flat major chord. We have arrived!

- I. Moderato cantabile, molto espressivo
- II. Allegro molto
- III. Adagio, ma non troppo – IV. Fuga. Allegro, ma non troppo

– *Intermission* –



- **Albéniz: *Suite española*, op. 47 – selections**

When he was not on the road as a child prodigy pianist, Isaac Albéniz (1860 – 1909) grew up on the south side of the Pyrenees. Yet the Spanish voice that appears in his music ranges far further afield than that specific region. Lang Lang has chosen six pieces from Albéniz' *Suite Española* (1886), offering a range of moods and energy, though also geography.

First comes the moonlit romance of *Granada*, the dancelike soul of *Cataluña*, and the largely sunny spirit of *Sevilla*. *Cádiz* on the Atlantic coast brings flirtatious moods both sweet and sassy. Handily the most famous of the set is *Asturias*; the driving intensity of its opening and closing pages framing gentle melancholy at the center. The set closes with *Cuba*, at that time a Spanish colony. Given the graceful flow Albéniz offers, one might be lounging in the sun and reflecting on past loves. It is a rare opportunity to hear the ever familiar strains of *Asturias* set within the broader context that the composer himself had imagined.

- I. Granada
- II. Cataluña
- III. Sevilla
- IV. Cádiz
- V. Asturias
- VIII. Cuba

- **Granados: *Goyescas*, op. 11, no. 4 – *Quejas, o La Maja y El Ruiseñor***

The spirited culture of their native Spain inspired both painter Francisco Goya (1746 – 1828) and composer Enrique Granados (1867 – 1918). Combine the two, and that culture becomes even more vivid. With his piano suite *Goyescas* (1911), Granados set out to suggest the sometimes animated, sometimes tender moods one might find in Goya's work. In *The Maiden and the Nightingale*, the bird finds voice with fluttery trills, the girl with a melancholy, song-like melody. For the finale, Granados expanded upon the warbling effects to give the nightingale the final word in the dialog.

- **Liszt: *Consolation no. 2* in E major**

Liszt's *Consolations* (1850) were inspired by the *Penseés poétiques (Poetic Thoughts)* of poet Joseph Delorme. The second of the six pieces bears the tempo marking *Un poco più mosso*: a bit more motion. It does not dash along spiritedly, but the composer imagined restfulness, not slumber. The effect is sweet and reflective, almost Chopinesque, holding back from Liszt's usual pianistic fireworks. Virtuosity isn't always flamboyance: there is also the expressive flavors one might apply to each phrase.

- **Liszt: *Venezia e Napoli* – III. *Tarantella***

A vibrant folk dance of southern Italy, the tarantella is most identified with Naples. Liszt was of Hungarian heritage, not Italian. However, he was quite a traveler for his time, and certainly fond of flavoring his piano works with vigor. The last of four movements of his *Venezia e Napoli* (1840), Liszt's *Tarantella* prances or swirls by turn. Tender passages offer contrast in the central pages, though electricity returns as the piece charges to its close. Even highly skilled Neapolitan dancers would be hard-pressed to keep up!

