

ST. OLAF COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

Boe Steinway Dedication Recital:

Female Composers, Beyond the Notes

DR. SOOJUNG HONG, *PIANO*



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2026 • 7:00PM

BOE MEMORIAL CHAPEL

PROGRAM

Piano Sonata in E minor (1932)

Florence Price (1887 - 1953)

I. Andante-Allegro

II. Andante

III. Scherzo:Allegro

Chaconne (1963)

Sophia Gubaidulina (1931 - 2025)

Mephisto Rag (2002)

Libby Larson (b. 1950)

Das Jahr

Fanny Mendelssohn (1804 - 1847)

September

October

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Soojung Hong is an award-winning pianist, educator, and the founder and Artistic Director of PianoFun Minnesota, where she is actively expanding masterclasses, festivals, and summer programs for young musicians across the region. Her performances span major solo, chamber, and orchestral stages throughout the United States and abroad. Dr. Hong's current work includes a project supported by the Minnesota State Arts Board's Artist Initiative Grant, "A concert artist brings piano music by diverse local and international female composers to Greater Minnesota." The project launches with a Faculty Recital at Normandale Community College and continues with a three-venue concert tour across Greater Minnesota this fall.

Her previous Artist Initiative Grant resulted in a full-length video production of Fanny Mendelssohn's *Das Jahr*, (The Year) integrating the cycle with curated visual art and poetry to illuminate its expressive and historical context. Dr. Hong performed Clara Schumann's Piano Concerto, Op. 7 in A minor with the Linden Hills Chamber Orchestra at Normandale Community College in 2025. She appeared on the Dame Myra Hess Concert Series in Chicago, broadcast live on WFMT, and recently performed Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 1 in F-sharp Minor with the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra in a sold-out concert that received an enthusiastic community response.

A dedicated teacher and mentor, Dr. Hong serves with the faculty at Normandale Community College and the MacPhail Center for Music. Her students have earned recognition in regional and international competitions, and she is frequently invited to present master classes and adjudicate at collegiate institutions. She holds degrees from Ewha Woman's University and the University of Minnesota, where she completed her Doctor of Musical Arts with Alexander Braginsky under full scholarship. www.pianofunmn.com

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

“Die Spielleute,”

Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff (1788-1857)

Translation by the fall 2026 class German 275 (Translation Theory and Practice): Ryan Birnesser '27, Jakob Eenigenburg '28, Erin Featherstone '27, Leander Frank '27, Sabrina Heiny '27, Isabel Kirkeby '29, Sydney LaVoi '27, Tatum Lubinski '27, Lucan O'Neal '26, Emily Scopatz '29, Agnes Smith '29, Gerrit Vanderschoot '27, Metty Wartenberger, *Universität Konstanz*, Prof. Amanda Randall, *course instructor*

The poem “Die Spielleute” was published in Eichendorff’s 1841 collection of Romantic “Wanderlieder,” wandering songs, though its title figure dates to the Middle Ages. “Spielleute” were groups of itinerant musicians and entertainers, traveling minstrels or jongleurs who performed at festive gatherings, but lived at the margin of society. By the early 1800s, the word “Spielleute” came to describe the military bands by whose brass and drums the troops’ routines were ordered. “Wir blasen Viktoria!” thus might evoke a Napoleonic-era, rather than a medieval scene. Our collaborative translation retains the original German word to accommodate the multiple associations.

“Die Spielleute”

Frühmorgens durch die Klüfte
Wir blasen Viktoria!
Eine Lerche fährt durch die Lüfte:
»Die Spielleut sind schon da!«
Da dehnt ein Turm und reckt sich
Verschlafen im Morgengrau,
Wie aus dem Traume streckt sich
Der Strom durch die stille Au,
Und ihre Äuglein balde
Tun auf die Bächlein all
Im Wald, im grünen Walde,
Das ist ein lustger Schall!

Das ist ein lustges Reisen,
Der Eichbaum kühl und frisch
Mit Schatten, wo wir speisen,
Deckt uns den grünen Tisch.
Zum Frühstück musizieren
Die muntern Vögelein,
Der Wald, wenn sie pausieren,
Stimmt wunderbar mit ein,
Die Wipfel tut er neigen,
Als gesegnet’ er uns das Mahl,
Und zeigt uns zwischen den Zweigen
Tief unten das weite Tal.

Tief unten da ist ein Garten,
Da wohnt eine schöne Frau,
Wir können nicht lange warten,
Durchs Gittertor wir schaun,
Wo die weißen Statuen stehen,
Da ists so still und kühl,
Die Wasserkünste gehen,
Der Flieger duftet schwül.
Wir ziehn vorbei und singen
In der stillen Morgenzeit,
Sie hörts im Traume klingen,
Wir aber sind schon weit.

“Die Spielleute”

At dawn through the rifts
We blare Viktoria!
A lark soars through the skies:
“The Spielleute have arrived!”
A tower reaches and rises
Sleepily in the morning gray,
The river stretches, as out of a dream
Across the quiet plain,
And soon the little streams
Open all their tiny eyes
In the forest, the green forest
O what a merry sound!

O what a merry journey,
The oak tree, cool and dewy
With shadows for us spreads
a verdant table where we dine.
For our breakfast, the birds
sing us a jolly tune,
When they pause, the forest
Adds its marvelous voice,
It bends its treetops low
As if to bless our meal,
And shows us through the branches
The vast valley far below.

There is a garden far below,
Where lives a lovely woman,
But we cannot wait for long,
So through the barred gate we peek,
So calm and cool it is, there,
Where the white statues stand,
Where the fountains spring,
Where the lilac fragrance fills the air.
As we pass by, we sing
In the quiet morning hour,
She hears us sing, as in a dream,
But we are far beyond.

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

An den Mond"

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

Füllest wieder Busch und Tal
Still mit Nebelglanz,

Lösest endlich auch einmal
Meine Seele ganz;
Breitest über mein Gefild
Lindernd deinen Blick,

Wie des Freundes Auge mild
Über mein Geschick.
Jeden Nachklang fühlt mein Herz
Froh- und trüber Zeit,

Wandle zwischen Freud und Schmerz
In der Einsamkeit.
Fließe, fließe, lieber Fluß!
Nimmer werd ich froh,

So verrauschte Scherz und Kuß,
Und die Treue so.
Ich besaß es doch einmal,
Was so köstlich ist!

Daß man doch zu seiner Qual
Nimmer es vergißt!
Rausche, Fluß, das Tal entlang,
Ohne Rast und Ruh,

Rausche, flüstre meinem Sang
Melodien zu,
Wenn du in der Winternacht
Wütend überschwillst,

Oder um die Frühlingspracht
Junger Knospen quillst.
Selig, wer sich vor der Welt
Ohne Haß verschließt,

Einen Freund am Busen hält
Und mit dem genießt,
Was, von Menschen nicht gewußt
Oder nicht bedacht,

Durch das Labyrinth der Brust
Wandelt in der Nacht.

"To the Moon" (first published 1776)

Trans. Edgar Alfred Bowring (1848-1863)

Bush and vale thou fill'st again
With thy misty ray,

And my spirit's heavy chain
Castest far away.
Thou dost o'er my fields extend
Thy sweet soothing eye,

Watching like a gentle friend,
O'er my destiny.
Vanish'd days of bliss and woe
Haunt me with their tone,

Joy and grief in turns I know,
As I stray alone.
Stream beloved, flow on! flow on!
Ne'er can I be gay!

Thus have sport and kisses gone,
Truth thus pass'd away.
Once I seem'd the lord to be
Of that prize so fair!

Now, to our deep sorrow, we
Can forget it ne'er.
Murmur, stream, the vale along,
Never cease thy sighs;

Murmur, whisper to my song
Answering melodies!
When thou in the winter's night
Overflow'st in wrath,

Or in spring-time sparklest bright,
As the buds shoot forth.
He who from the world retires,
Void of hate, is blest;

Who a friend's true love inspires,
Leaning on his breast!
That which heedless man ne'er knew,
Or ne'er thought aright,

Roams the bosom's labyrinth through,
Boldly into night.

PROGRAM NOTES

by Robert Gronemann

Piano Sonata in E minor, Florence Price (1887-1953)

Florence Price's musical education began in her home of Little Rock, Arkansas. Her first music teacher was her mother, Florence Irene Smith, a soprano and concert pianist. From 1903 to 1906 Price studied at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston and earned a double major in piano pedagogy and organ performance. Once she moved to Chicago the scale of Price's works grew in tandem with the opportunities she encountered. This salient shift parallels African American renaissances in Chicago and New York as defined by established artists and musicians as well as incoming migrants from the south.

Price's 1932 Piano Sonata in E minor features three movements. At a time when composers experimented with early serialism, Price employed neoclassical styles with unique twists. Price incorporated the forms and rich harmonic language of the Romantic European composers throughout the work however the rhythms clearly show the influence of emerging Afro-American styles. The sectional third movement opens with a rigorous tarantella (Dance of the Tarantula) evocative of the whirling motions associated with the southern Italian dance intended to drive the venom from an afflicted victim. Other sections feature the syncopated cake-walk rhythm that may be traced to its African roots and ragtime stride left hand. Also listen for the Juba-style, which involves dancing with stomping and using the body as an instrument by pounding the chest and slapping the thighs. In addition, one can detect the influence of George Gershwin's efforts to blend Jazz with European genres.

Chaconne, Sophia Gubaidulina (1931-2025)

The Chaconne has a 500-year history of transformation as it passed from a fast dance in the early 1500s to a simple and slower improvisational genre into the 21st century. Similar to how jam bands like Phish and the Grateful Dead structure songs with simple chord progressions for ease of improvisation, musicians reduce structural elements to simplicity to allow for more freedom of expression. The structure is very clear. Listen for the transformation of melodic and rhythmic elements as the cycle progresses. As a prominent Russian composer, Sofia Gubaidulina is known for her unique fusion of Russian and Central Asian musical styles with Western classical traditions. Her work is characterized by its spiritual depth and personal symbolism, often exploring themes of faith and existence. She studied composition and piano at the Kazan Conservatory, graduating in 1954. Continued her studies at the Moscow Conservatory, where she was influenced by notable composers like Dmitri Shostakovich.



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PROGRAM NOTES

by Robert Gronemann

Mephisto Rag, Libby Larsen (b. 1950)

Johanne Goethe's telling of the Faust story is perhaps the most intriguing version of the old tale of temptation. Franz Liszt wrote three Mephisto Waltzes breathed in 19th century pianistic pyrotechnics; a signature of Liszt's generation. Liszt's approach distorted the most popular dance at the time, the waltz into a twisted and seductive piece of solo piano music. Despite the programmatic format made popular by Romantic composers such as Liszt, the structure of the piece is easy to follow and the themes are memorable tunes. Larsen's update follows the Romantic aesthetic for pianistic virtuosity while maintaining simplicity of the form into three easy to define sections.

Minnesota composer Libby Larsen was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters (2024), composed over 500 works including orchestra, opera, vocal and chamber music, symphonic winds, and band. Her work is widely recorded. An advocate for the music and musicians of our time, in 1973 Larsen co-founded the Minnesota Composers Forum, now the American Composer's Forum. Grammy Award winner and former holder of the Papamarkou Chair at John W. Kluge Center of the Library of Congress, Larsen has also held residencies with the Minnesota Orchestra, the Charlotte Symphony, and the Colorado Symphony. From 2014-2020 as, Artistic Director of the John Duffy Institute for New Opera, she guided a faculty of practicing professional artists in nurturing and production of new opera by American Composers. Larsen's 2017 biography, *Libby Larsen: Composing an American Life*, Denise Von Glahn, author, is available from the University Illinois Press.

Das Jahr, Fanny Mendelssohn (1804-1847)

Like Libby Larsen, Fanny composed nearly 500 works, although most remained unpublished during her lifetime. Societal expectations limited her opportunities for a public career in music, as women were often discouraged from pursuing professional paths. Fanny's identity as a composer was often secondary to her roles as a wife and mother, which further constrained her public recognition. Fanny played a significant role in organizing and performing at private concerts which were crucial for her and her brother, Felix's early careers. She was known for her exceptional abilities, often compared to her brother's, yet her works were overshadowed by his fame.

Prior to the 20th century, the publishing practice for women composers included using a male pseudonym. For Fanny, that was her brother Felix. One cycle that Felix respected too much to not publish under his own name was Fanny's *Das Jahr* or "The Year", twelve character pieces for piano each depicting the month of the calendar year. Written in 1841, *Das Jahr* constitutes a musical diary that reflects Fanny's thoughts, emotions, and observations of her year abroad; the first half having been spent in Rome, the second half her return home to Berlin with stops along the way.