

**Sammi and Effie Li**

Six Morceaux, Op. 11, II. Scherzo.....Rachmaninoff

Rachmaninoff’s Six Morceaux were written in 1894 as a piano duet. The second piece in this set, Scherzo, is fun and whimsical. We especially enjoyed learning this piece because of the dramatic changes in dynamics and character. We hope you enjoy this opening to the recital!

**Lilian Ji**

Concerto in D Major, Hob. XVIII, Vivace.....Haydn  
*Orchestral Reduction: Karen Dalley*

Although this concerto was one of Haydn’s most familiar pieces, it raises a number of unanswered questions. We don’t know exactly when it was composed, or what occasion it was composed for. This is the last concerto that Haydn wrote, made for the harpsichord and fortepiano. It shows more similarities to Mozart’s piano concertos than his other keyboard concertos.

Today I will be performing the first movement of this piece, which is very joyful and happy, although sometimes slipping into a minor key and making a blue feeling. My favorite part of the piece is the cadenza, which is a solo part at the end of the concerto. The cadenza starts out bouncy and playful, later becoming more flowy and lyrical. I really enjoyed learning this piece, and I hope you enjoy it as much as I do. Special thanks to Ms. Dalley for accompanying me!

**Effie Li**

Nocturne in E Major, Op. 62, No. 2.....Chopin

Chopin was one of the great composers of the Romantic movement. Romanticism was a period of flourishment during the 18th-19th centuries in Europe for music, art, and literature. The most important ideal of Romanticism was prioritizing feelings and emotion over logic and reason, contrasting against the previous period of Enlightenment in the 17th-18th centuries, where mankind mainly focused on rationality and reason. Of course, with these new ideals, the attributes of music, art, and literature changed. In music, specifically, there was more emotion and lyrical melodies. Overall, this music had more passion, in contrast to previous eras, like classical and baroque.

Coming from the Romantic era, Chopin’s music was naturally more passionate and lyrical, one of the reasons why he is notorious for his works, which are still relevant today. His expressive composing style is reflected in this nocturne. This nocturne was the last nocturne Chopin wrote, following an ABCAB format. The A and B sections have typical nocturne-like melodies, lyrical and flowing. Conversely, the C section is full of agitation and 4 different voice lines—soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. This section of the music is much more complicated than the previous A and B sections, therefore making it harder to play. With more notes comes more sound, especially played with an agitated feel, which contradicts the required gentle touch of nocturnes, making balance a key factor in this middle section in order not to sound intrusive and bright.

This nocturne ends with a pleasing E major chord, giving the listeners a feel of satisfaction and completion. This nocturne proved more difficult for me than I expected to learn and play, and I hope you enjoy it as you listen to the sweet melodies portrayed in this piece.

Etude in F Major, Op. 10, No. 8.....Chopin

Etudes are known for being technically challenging, as their reason for being composed was for the purpose of technical study and development. This joyful etude is known by the nickname “Sunshine Etude” by many, which is what I first knew this etude by. In this etude, the melody is in the left hand, sounding bouncy and energetic, while the right hand (which also contains a lot of energy) is filled with lightning fast arpeggios to accompany the left hand, which sound sparkly. Similar to the nocturne, this etude also resolves in a chord resembling the key, which in this piece is F major.

Although this etude is also a work by Chopin, it contrasts greatly with the nocturne I played previously, as it is technically based and it is much more energetic than the slow and melodic nocturne. At first, because of its technical nature, I struggled with the right hand and found it hard to correctly portray the fun character of the left hand, as I was mostly focused on the clarity of my right hand. The problem was, the musicality of the left hand was just as difficult as the technicality of the right hand. Although, with time, I was able to advance in my technical abilities and simultaneously, my musical understanding of the piece elevated, which brought me to a closer portrayal of what the piece is supposed to be. I hope you are able to experience the same joy listening to this piece (if I play it correctly, that is) that I get while playing!

## Averie Wu

Concerto in A Major, K. 488, Adagio.....Mozart  
*Orchestral Reduction: Sammi Li*

From 1784 to 1786, Mozart was making most of his money off of his music. Specifically, his piano concertos. During this period, he wrote twelve piano concertos. The one I will be playing today was finished, according to Mozart's own catalogue, on March 2, 1786.

In contrast to the other two movements, the 2nd movement is slow and sad. It starts with the solo piano, the orchestra coming in smoothly later. Throughout the piece, the orchestra weaves in and out, effortlessly continuing the piece. At the end, the orchestra and piano end together.

This piece is the only piece that Mozart wrote in F# minor, which makes it unique. Overall, this piece follows an A-B-A structure.

Special thank you to Sammi Li for accompanying me!

Tocatta from Trois Pièces.....Poulenc

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) was a less known French composer. He was musically influenced by a fellow French composer, Claude Debussy, as well as many others, such as Viñes, Satie, and Stravinsky.

The toccata I will be playing today (and the only toccata Poulenc ever composed) is the third part of a collection of pieces, called Trois Pièces. Composed in 1928, the three pieces are not as well-known as Poulenc's other compositions.

This piece is a fast piece, which means that it is hard to play each note clearly and correctly. The piece starts out loud and rough, then transitions into a couple of smoother passages. However, the piece is mostly loud.

Towards the end, it becomes quiet, until the music suddenly gets louder. The last section leads to the last note, ironically, the last note on the piano. Because of this, I have to aim to hit the note, which I unfortunately missed and hit the wood in one of my best recordings of the piece.

## Dennis Ji

Impromptu in Gb Major, Op.90, No.3.....Schubert

Schubert's impromptus were written in 2 sets of 4 pieces each, but only the first 2 were published in the composer's lifetime. The publisher of this piece originally published this in G major, instead of the way Schubert had written it (Gb major).

This piece features a long, soaring melody with a flowing accompaniment. It transitions into a stormy middle section before gradually returning to its calm, relaxed flow.

*Romeo and Juliet Suite*, Op. 75, VI. Montagues and Capulets.....Prokofiev

This is a powerful piece written for the fight between the Montagues and Capulets, the two feuding houses of the play *Romeo and Juliet*. This piece starts out with a strong bass and a powerful melody. This section is followed by an extremely contrasting middle section, with the dynamic dropping to pianissimo. In the orchestral version of the piece, the melody is played by the flutes. Finally, slowly at first, the main theme emerges again. This piece received lots of recognition over time, and has been used in *Sing 2* and *The Simpsons*.

### **Hannah Zou**

Nocturne in F Major, Op. 15, No. 1.....Chopin

Frederic Chopin was a Polish composer who wrote many pieces, primarily for the piano, including numerous etudes, ballades, and nocturnes.

This nocturne begins with a slow, lyrical A section with the right hand playing the melody and the left hand playing the harmony like any other Chopin nocturne. This section reminds me of a nighttime stroll outside, breathing in fresh air under the street lamps, just like the meaning of “nocturne,” meaning “of the night.”

In contrast to the first section, the middle section is loud and stormy, this time with the melody altering between the left and right hand. Most other nocturnes don’t have this stormy B section and it’s very unique for a nocturne; it’s one of the reasons I chose to play this piece.

After this, it goes back to the A section, with almost the same exact notes. The piece then ends softly, shutting the door quietly after your stroll in the dark.

Ricercare and Toccata.....Menotti

Gian Carlo Menotti was a composer who was born in Cadegliano-Viconago, Italy. He moved to America in 1928 and referred to himself as an American, but stayed an Italian citizen. He wrote many operas throughout his lifetime, including *The Old Maid and the Thief*, which his Ricercare and Toccata is based on.

In the opera, the “Old Maid” is Miss Todd, who is an unmarried middle-aged woman. She encounters a wanderer named Bob, and her maid Laetitia convinces her to let him stay at their house. Later, they find out that a thief in the area looks just like Bob. Miss Todd wants to get rid of Bob, but Laetitia disagrees. So, they lay out money for Bob to “steal” to keep him there and to not arouse suspicion from the community. However, they soon run out of money and resort to stealing from neighbors to earn more money. At the end of the opera, they find out that Bob is actually not the thief, and all their efforts had been in vain.

The Ricercare is slow and calm at the beginning, but towards the end it becomes louder and louder until it stops suddenly. It finishes with a soft and dissonant ending. The Toccata is a fingery movement. The same rhythm repeats throughout the piece in a fugue-like manner, with one hand playing the main melody and the other hand playing accompanying sixteenth notes.

## Taksh Gupta

Nocturne in C minor, Op. 48, No.1.....Chopin

Frederic Chopin was a Polish composer born on March 1st, 1810 in Zelazowa Wola, Poland. Chopin grew up in Warsaw, where he completed his musical education and composed his first works. Chopin left Warsaw for Paris at the age of 20 years old, right before the November 1830 Polish Uprising against Russia. While in Paris, Chopin composed many of his most famous pieces, including this Nocturne in 1841. The piece starts out with a bass and chord pattern in the left hand and a simple melody in the right. The chords progress as the melody begins to grow and become more complex. Soon thereafter, there is a chorale section in C Major. This section is quieter than the first, while having the melody shown in the top note of each chord. These chords slowly grow louder, into a section Mrs. Clarfield refers to as the “turkey and stuffing” section. This section has the melody played a few notes at a time, with shorter, faster, chords “stuffed” in between. The whole section builds up to the climax of the piece, which is a series of descending octaves in both hands to lead to the ending of the piece, which slowly fades out. The hardest part of playing this piece is the contrast between the “A” and “B” sections. The “A” section is in C minor, and has a typical Chopin Nocturne feel. The “B” section, however, transitions to minor, and is played in a completely different style to the first section. The chords move slowly, but the melody still must be present and clear. I hope you enjoy Chopin’s Nocturne in C minor!

Sonata Op. 29, No. 4, Allegro con brio.....Prokofiev

Sergei Prokofiev was a Russian composer born in 1891 in current day Ukraine. Prokofiev grew up listening to his mom practicing the piano during the evenings, which inspired him to learn about music as well. Prokofiev wrote his first piece at age 5, and was working on his first opera at age 9. This sonata was written in 1917. Prokofiev dedicated the sonata to his friend Maximilian Schmidhof, whose suicide in 1913 “saddened and shocked” him. The third movement of this sonata starts off with a quick scale up the piano followed by the motif that repeats throughout the movement. This scale, although played with both hands, should sound similar to a glissando, with minimal interruption between the hands. The first section continues with this motif, with slight variations when it returns. The next section features an interesting chromatic movement in the left hand while the right hand outlines chords. This leads to the next section, which also has the left hand moving in half steps. This section starts out very quiet, but builds as it leads back to the main theme. The “B” section is much more lyrical than the first, with a mostly single-note melody in the right hand with chords in the left. The “A” theme returns very softly but quickly grows into a triumphant coda and finish. I hope you enjoy listening to this piece as much as I enjoy performing it!

## Alex Wang

Sonata in C minor, K.457, Molto allegro.....Mozart

The Piano Sonata No. 14 in C minor, K. 457 by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was published in December 1785 by Artaria.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is perhaps the most famous classical composer of all time. Born in Salzburg, he was born into a musical family. His father Leopold was a piano teacher. His talent was discovered very early on and by the age of 5, he started composing music pieces later in his childhood and started performing for the European royalty. In his short life (he only lived to be 35), he wrote over 800 works of music. Some of his well-known works are *The Magic Flute*, *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, and *Requiem in D minor*. His final work, *Requiem*, is shrouded in mystery as he died before he completed it. Mozart dedicated this piece to Therese von Trattner, one of his students.

This sonata is unique because it was one of 2 sonatas written in a minor key, the other being Piano Sonata No. 8 in A minor, K. 310. The sonata has 3 movements: Molto Allegro, Adagio, and Allegro Assai. My favorite parts of this piece are the contrasting loud and soft dynamics that appear throughout the piece. I hope you enjoy it!

Grandes Études de Paganini in G# Minor, S. 141, No. 3, “La Campanella”.....Liszt

“La Campanella” by Franz Liszt is the third of Liszt’s 6 Grandes Études de Paganini, written during the romantic era. It is written in G-sharp minor. La Campanella is Italian for “Little Bell”, a theme that is present throughout the entire piece, especially with the quick repeated sixteenth notes. Its recognizable melody comes from the final movement of Nicolo Paganini’s Violin Concerto No 2 in B minor.

The composer of this piece is Franz Liszt (10/22/1811 - 7/31/1886). Franz Liszt is a renowned Hungarian composer who lived during the romantic era. In addition, he was a skillful pianist and performer. He is very well known for his technical challenging pieces. His work was influential to many composers, such as Frederick Chopin, Robert Schumann, Richard Wagner, Camille Saint Saens, and more. Some well-known pieces of his are “Un Sospiro”, his Transcendental Etudes, Piano Sonata in B minor, Hungarian Rhapsody, and of course “La Campanella.”

The piece starts out soft in the upper registers of the piano before gradually cumulating to a grand finale. This piece is a dream piece that I really wanted to play for a long time, and I’m really grateful to Mrs. Clarfield for giving me this opportunity to finally perform it.

## Amber Wang

Nocturne Op. 33.....Barber

During quarantine in 2020 I learned the Barber Nocturne and it became one of my favorite pieces to listen to and perform. Barber balances the beauty of a nocturne with the eeriness of contemporary music to create the masterpiece. He uses 12-tone compositional techniques - using all chromatic tones before repeating a note again. This interesting technique gives the piece its bizarre melody.

When preparing for this recital, I was given the opportunity to choose an old piece to perform. The Barber nocturne is a beautiful piece that was the centerpiece of my piano career during covid, and one that I never got the opportunity to perform live. I chose this piece to reflect on my piano career and share this beautiful piece with everybody.

Tea For Two.....Art Tatum and Vincent Youmans

Back in 2011, when I was 7 years old, I went to my first Yuja Wang concert in McCarter Theater. At the end of the concert, Yuja played Tea for Two as a final encore. It was the final encore that sparked my love for both classical music and jazz. It is only right for me to close this chapter of my piano career the way that it started. After 10 years of asking Mrs. Clarfield to play this piece, I am proud to perform Tea for Two today.

Performed improvised by Art Tatum in 1932, written by Vincent Youmans, and performed by Yuja Wang in 2017, this piece was originally written as a song in 1924. It was then a movie in 1950 starring Doris Day and Gordon MacRae. Below are the lyrics:

Picture you upon my knee,  
Just tea for two and two for tea,  
Just me for you  
And you for me alone.  
Nobody near us  
To see us or hear us,  
No friends or relations  
On weekend vacations.  
We won't have it known, dear,  
That we own a telephone, dear;  
Day will break and you'll awake  
And start to bake a sugar cake,  
For me to take  
For all the boys to see.  
We will raise a family,  
A boy for you, a girl for me.  
Oh, can't you see  
How happy we would be?

I am beyond grateful for the years that I have spent in Mrs. Clarfields studio and am thankful for the many lessons I have learned about both music and life. Tea for Two has always been an important goal in my piano career and I am so happy to be able to perform this piece as my final performance. Thank you all for the endless support and thank you Mrs. Clarfield for the past 13 years!

~~ **Intermission** ~~

## Daniel Haiduc

4 Sketches, Op. 15, Nos. 1 and 3.....Amy Beach

Amy Beach (1867-1944) is considered one of the first great female American composers. Like Fanny Mendelssohn, her parents discouraged her from having a career in music, pressuring her to fulfill the domestic expectations of marriage and motherhood. Her synesthesia highly influenced her choice of keys and modes within her writing.

The first piece, nicknamed “In Autumn” was inspired by the poem *L’automne* by Alphonse de Lamartine. The clash between A major and F sharp minor in the piece is used to convey the autumnal season’s interpolation of life and death. The piece ends in F sharp major, a reference to the bittersweet acceptance of death in the conclusion of Lamartine’s poem.

Greetings! Wood crowned with remnants of green  
With yellowing foliage scattered on turf!  
Greetings, last beautiful days! Mourning nature  
Fit for sorrow but pleasing my gaze! ...  
The flower surrenders its perfume to zephyrs and falls;  
To life, to sun, there are farewells;  
And I? I die; and my soul, when it expires,  
Will sigh like a sad and melodious sound.

The third piece in this set of four, nicknamed “Dreaming”, was inspired by the poem written by Victor Hugo *A celle qui est voilée*, which means “The one who is veiled”. The first line of the poem is quoted in the piece, which says “Tu me parles du fond d’un rêve” (“You speak to me from the depths of a dream”). This piece consists of a beautiful melody, interesting chord progressions, and a passionate climax. I hope you enjoy it.

You speak to me from the depths of a dream  
As a soul speaks to the living.  
Like the foam of the shore,  
Your dress flutters in the winds.  
I am the seaweed of the numberless waves,  
The captive of victorious destiny;  
I’m the one that all the shadow  
Covers without extinguishing his heart...

Études de Concert, S. 144, No. 2, “Gnomesreigen”.....Liszt

Liszt’s “Gnomesreigen”, or “Dance of the Gnomes”, is part of a set of two concert etudes which were dedicated to Liszt’s pupil, Dionys Prunker. While the first etude is more lyrical and has a sense of tranquility, “Gnomesreigen” is humorous, cheerful, and mischievous with a sparkly texture. It is written in a non-traditional rondo form with two main themes. Theme A depicts the gnomes, which are small and impish. The articulation and dynamics seem to depict their light-footed and merry pace. Theme B is more melodic and fluid, in which we can imagine the gnomes joining hands and swinging around the floor. The compositional techniques in both themes create a joyous and playful effect.

### **Adrianna Ang**

Fantasia in C minor, BWV 906.....J.S. Bach

John Sebastian Bach was born on March 31, 1685 in Eisenach Germany. He was born into a musical family and before orphaned around an early age, his eldest brother gave him his first organ lessons. Bach did well at school, and he was selected for a choir of poor boys at the school in Luneburg, Germany. His era used harpsichords rather because pianos had not yet been created yet. Some of Bach’s most famous pieces include Toccata and Fugue in D minor and Air on the G String. Another is Fantasia in C minor.

This piece originated around 1729 as a 'Fantasia per il cembalo' (Fantasia for Harpsichord). At a later date Bach added a fugue as a second movement, although this is not included here. Fantasia recalls Domenico Scarlatti, a prolific composer of keyboard sonatas, in its exceptional brilliance and highly idiomatic writing for the instrument. In particular, the second main theme makes the use of hand crossing, which is common in Scarlatti's keyboard music. This piece includes a lot of ornamentation commonly used during this time and contrapoint which is one melody going from one hand to the other. Please enjoy.

Thunder in the Drought Season.....Chen Peixun

Chen Peixun was a Chinese composer born in Hongkong in the year of 1921. He is a composer of the contemporary era and has created multiple works that are creative and a great representation to Chinese music and culture. He has included many traditional Cantonese folk songs into his pieces like the one being played today. Chen made important contributions to the Chinese symphonic music of the 20th century. He composed three symphonies. No. 1 is called *My Motherland*, the first movement of which, entitled “Aria of Snow”, was used in the video game Civilization V. No. 2 is entitled *Qingming Ji* (“Rites of Qingming”). No. 3 is entitled *Mei Song Zan* (“Ode to Plums and Pines”). He taught at the Central Conservatory in Beijing and later died in 2007. Thank you for coming out and I very much appreciate the support of our studio. Please enjoy the variety of music being played today!

## Gracelynnne Hao

Sonata in Eb Major, Hob.XVI:52, Presto .....Haydn

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) is widely known as one of the few classical giants of his era, known for his full range of emotions, humor, and gravitas. Throughout his works, he delves deeper into the idea of using small motifs to create larger forms with each motif connecting the overall musical structure together. The piece I will be playing today is part of a full sonata with three movements he wrote on a visit to England. He takes advantage of the English piano as opposed to the usual Viennese counterpart by leveraging its more room-filling sound. The 3rd movement introduces the pulse of an army drum in a series of repeated notes over the low bass. The mechanical precision that follows is frequently stopped dead in its tracks by sudden pauses that set the listener up for a sound explosion and a burst of activity to follow. This piece showcases the motif of wittiness throughout Haydn's music really well which is something I have enjoyed expressing while playing!

Troubled Water..... Margaret Bonds

Margaret Bonds (1913-1972) was a pianist and composer who played an important role in the development of twentieth century classical and musical theater. In her early life, her mother would often host African American writers, artists, and musicians who would regularly appear in the Bond home to play- she would later claim to know every living African-American composer at the time. Completing her first musical composition at five, she would go on to later receive bachelors and masters degrees in music from Northwestern University. Her compositions were performed by many concert artists including Louis Armstrong and Woody Herman, and she herself became the first African-American woman to ever perform with a renowned American orchestra, the Chicago Symphony. One of her most notable achievements was her collaboration with African-American poet Langston Hughes to accompany his poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" in 1941 which would later blossom over the next decade into larger projects such as theatrical adaptations of some of his works.

The piece I'll be playing today, Troubled Water, is based directly on the spiritual melody "Wade in the Water". It has historical origins rooted in the Underground Railroad where Harriet Tubman was said to have used this song to urge slaves to wade in rivers to cover their tracks. This piece was originally a composition for piano solo with audience participation where, just before the reprise, the audience was to sing the familiar spiritual tune and underneath their singing the piano was to re-enter, once again playing the familiar ostinato from the opening. This music has a jazzy feel and intricate rhythms that layer over each other in unique ways. Since I generally find learning and interpreting contemporary music fascinating, I hope you'll enjoy my performance just as much as I loved learning this piece!

## Evan Lin

Etude-Tableaux in C Minor, Op. 39, No. 1.....Rachmaninoff

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873 - 1943) was a pianist and composer of the Romantic era. Inspired by other Russian composers, his work was characterized by distinct voicing and colors, and if nothing else, just “lots of notes”, as Mrs. Clarfield would always joke. The Étude-Tableaux, or “study pictures”, Op. 39, is the second set of etudes composed by Rachmaninoff (the first set being Op. 33). It comprises nine etudes, full of suspense and darkness. Etude no. 1 is no exception. Beginning with rapid wave-like oscillations in the right hand and deep chords in the bass, the piece has a tempestuous, unpredictable quality to it. The voicing is especially difficult with so many notes to pay attention to. Listen for the middle section, when the piece dies down and introduces a bright, clear section with “bells” in the right hand and accents in the left hand, a moment of peace in the storm. Afterwards, the piece quickly descends back into frenetic chaos before gradually augmenting, taking on longer phrases with increasingly heavy pedal, and on the last page finally arriving at a truly spectacular climax.

Etudes in Bb Minor and D# Minor, Op. 8, No. 11 & No. 12.....Scriabin

Alexander Scriabin (1871-1915) was a Russian composer as well, though he was primarily influenced by Frederic Chopin. Though he is not as well known, he was one of the most innovative and controversial composers of the early 1900s. Scriabin experienced synesthesia, in which auditory stimuli caused him to see colors. Etude no. 11 is forlorn and solemn. The theme has the melody in the top note, accompanied by softer chords in the bass. The softness is intense and brings out the heavy depression the piece is meant to convey. No. 12 is possibly Scriabin’s most well-known piece, famously Vladimir Horowitz’s go-to encores piece. It is in complete contrast to the previous etude, with the right hand almost entirely octaves and the left hand torturously jumping around the lower piano. As much as it is loud and rambunctious, this etude is also about getting soft and the build-up over time. I hope you enjoy this program as much as I did picking and performing it!

## Sammi Li

Concerto in C Minor, K. 491, Allegretto.....Mozart  
*Orchestral Reduction: Effie Li*

The C Minor Concerto is one of only two Mozart concertos composed in a minor key and takes on a richer, darker quality in contrast to Mozart's other concertos. This concerto has had a lasting influence on Mozart's contemporaries, namely Beethoven, who began his own Concerto in C Minor the same year that Mozart's Concerto in C Minor was published. Thus, the concerto takes on Beethoven-esque qualities, which become more apparent through the theme-and-variations structure of this piece. While the theme is first presented in a lighter manner, each following variation becomes more complex and dramatic with strings of scales, arpeggios, and broken chords. The piece finally ends in a cadenza-like section that begins lightly but increases in intensity and drive.

The concerto is also structured so that it largely resembles a large chamber work between many instruments. This is especially displayed by the conversations between the orchestra and the piano in the third movement, specifically when the variations are interrupted by a Mozartean middle section structured by a call and response between the piano and the orchestra.

Learning this concerto was an enjoyable experience for me because I had never played a piece by Mozart prior to this, and I really enjoy the chamber-quality of this work. I'm so excited to be exploring new repertoire, so I hope you all enjoy it!

Prelude in D Major, Op. 23, No. 4.....Rachmaninoff

When deciding on which pieces I would play for the summer recital, Mrs. C suggested that I choose my favorite piece that I've played as a nostalgic end to my time in the Clarfield studio. After two long weeks of indecision and contemplation, I ultimately chose to play this prelude. So why did I choose it? Well, I played this prelude during the summer recital of my freshman year, and I liked the idea of creating a full circle moment by ending my senior year with a performance of this piece again. Secondly, I have an emotional attachment to this piece and wanted to see how my interpretation of it would differ now that I'm three years older. My original program notes for the prelude looked like this:

The D Major prelude is slow and lyrical. One of its hardest qualities is the many voices it contains, which one might be able to play a bit more comfortably without having to make big leaps if they had hands the size of Rachmaninoff's. The main melody appears four times throughout the piece in different variations. During the first time that the melody appears, it is simple and appears with only the accompaniment in the left hand. The second time it appears is a little more complex and one more voice starts to add on to the melody. The climax appears during the third time the melody is heard, and the piece resolves peacefully when the melody appears for its fourth and final time, leaving the listener and the performer with a feeling of warmth.

While I still agree that the piece resolves peacefully, I never mentioned in my original program notes that the phrase before the resolution seems to raise a question or a possibility. I see this phrase as a parallel to where I am in my life right now: one phase has ended, but a new one has begun. Maybe my current ability to find more complexities in this piece is a testament to my growth over the years, which definitely would not have happened without the guidance of Mrs. Clarfield. I am forever grateful for her endless support and belief in my potential, which has shaped me into the musician and individual I am now.

**Alyssa Xu**

Variations Sérieuses, Op. 54.....Mendelssohn

Composed as part of an anthology to fundraise for the construction of a Beethoven monument in Germany, Variation Sérieuses earns its unique name by not only showcasing a variety of virtuosic passages like its mid-nineteenth century counterparts, but reflecting its impressive musicality. Each variation contains the essence of the beginning theme while still having its own distinct character, which ranges from dainty to driven. The main theme, simple and somber, ebbs and flows with each variation, gradually building to a riveting climax juxtaposing the stillness of the ending. The impressiveness of this piece is certainly not surprising - Mendelssohn, though being one of the prominent composers of his time, had originally declined the request to write for the collection because he felt that he would not be able to create a piece worthy of Beethoven's name. However, with persuasion from the prominent music critic Karl Kunt, Mendelssohn eventually agreed and engaged in intensive work to create the variations (which were actually originally composed in reverse order), making numerous revisions and alterations that resulted in the work of art still greatly admired to this day.

**Sammi Li & Amber Wang**

Scaramouche, Op. 165b, Brazileira.....Milhaud

Scaramouche is an incredibly fun, flashy, and dancy piece that combines elements of both French and Brazilian street music. The third movement specifically takes influence from Brazilian carnival music and closely resembles a samba, a popular dance form in Brazil. Milhaud incorporates heavily syncopated rhythms and dance-like articulations throughout this movement as well as alternating lines between the primo and secondo part to channel the lively spirit of this two-person dance.

Scaramouche was one of Mrs. Clarfield's favorite pieces to perform with her two piano partner of 30 years, Lillian Livingston, so we are incredibly excited and honored to be given the opportunity to perform this piece in our final Clarfield studio recital together!