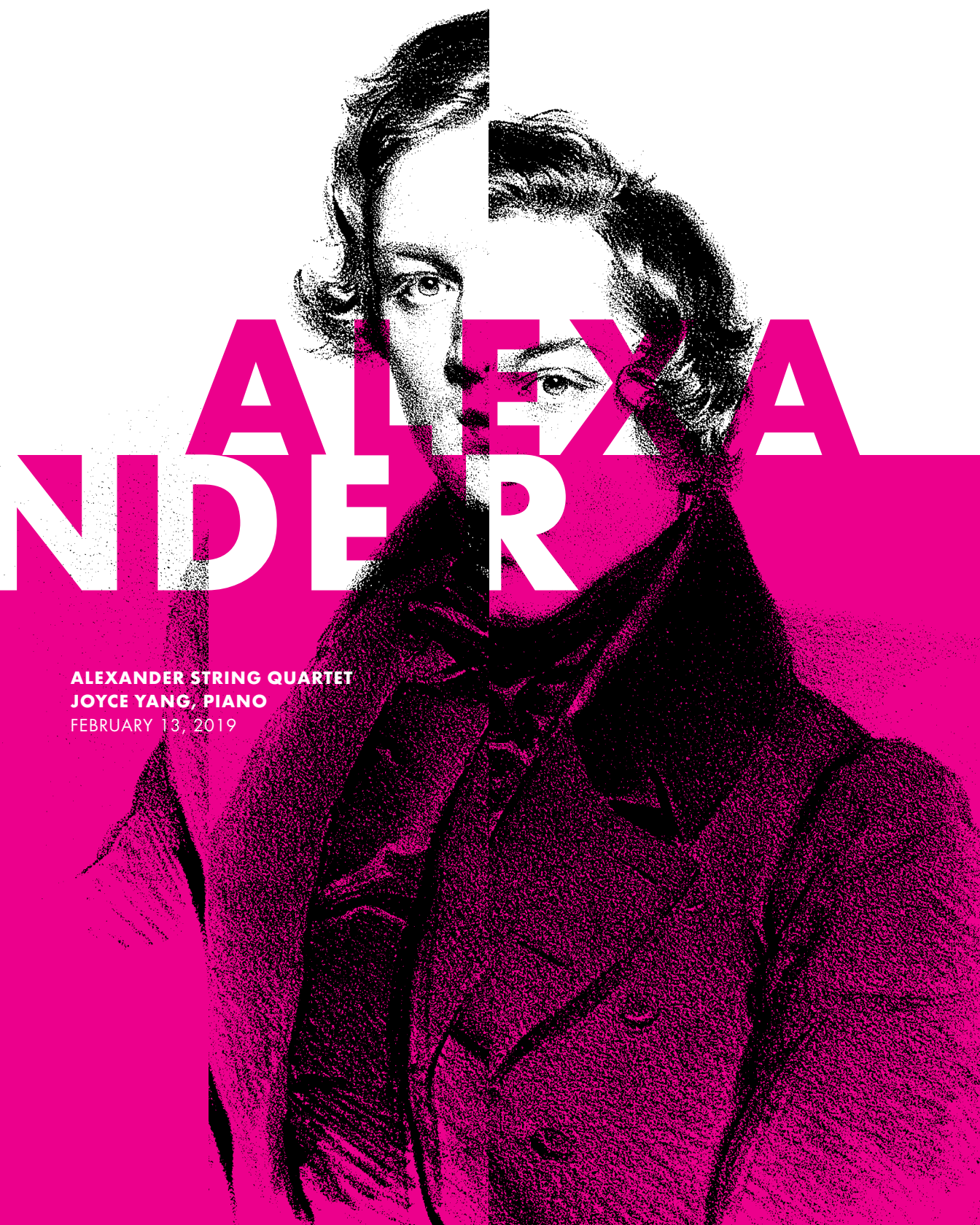


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**ALEXANDER STRING QUARTET**  
**JOYCE YANG, PIANO**  
FEBRUARY 13, 2019

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT

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Nearly thirty years ago, early in my music-critic days, I negatively reviewed a concert by the Alexander String Quartet, our guests tonight. I deemed their performance to be fussy and mannered, calling attention to the players rather than faithfully reporting the notes on the page. I was a music fundamentalist, insisting on a literal interpretation of the holy scores.

But within ten years, I was writing reviews criticizing musicians for being too literal, too cautious, too reluctant to bring something of themselves to the music.

Why the change of attitude? Over time, after listening intensely to multiple performances of the same compositions, and becoming less young and stupid, I realized that it isn't sufficient to just play the notes. In fact, a performance that is entirely straightforward and literal can suck the soul right out of music.

What I came to crave was not distortion, but detail and nuance, a more elastic line, more interesting deployment of inner voices, an illuminating way to phrase a familiar passage. In other words, the sort of performance I had dismissed when I'd heard the Alexander Quartet.

If every ensemble played only and exactly the notes on the page—which isn't quite possible, anyway—there would be no need for more than one ensemble in the world. There would be nothing new to hear in the music. Imagination—the composers', the performers', the listeners'—would be stifled.

I can't wait to find out what the Alexander Quartet and Joyce Yang will be up to tonight.

James Reel

JAMES REEL  
*President*



# ALEXANDER STRING QUARTET

## FEBRUARY 13, 2019

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### **Alexander String Quartet**

Zakarias Grafilo, *violin*

Frederick Lifszitz, *violin*

Paul Yarbrough, *viola*

Sandy Wilson, *cello*

with

**Joyce Yang, *piano***

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### **ALEXANDER STRING QUARTET**

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Having celebrated its 35th Anniversary in 2016, the Alexander String Quartet has performed in the major music capitals of five continents, securing its standing among the world's premiere ensembles. Widely admired for its interpretations of Beethoven, Mozart, and Shostakovich, the quartet's recordings of the Beethoven cycle (twice), and the Bartók and Shostakovich cycles have all won international critical acclaim. The quartet has also established itself as an important advocate of new music through over thirty commissions from such composers as Jake Heggie, Cindy Cox, Augusta Read Thomas, Robert Greenberg, Martin Bresnick, César Cano, and Pulitzer Prize-winner Wayne Peterson. A new work by Tarik O'Reagan, commissioned for the Alexander by the Boise Chamber Music Series, had its premiere in October 2016, and a work for piano quintet from Samuel Adams is planned for premiere in early 2019 with pianist Joyce Yang. A major artistic presence in its home base of San Francisco, the Alexander has served since 1989 as Ensemble in Residence for San Francisco Performances and Directors of the Morrison Chamber Music Center in the College of Liberal and Creative Arts at San Francisco State University.

The Alexander String Quartet was formed in New York City in 1981 and captured international attention as the first American quartet to win the London International String Quartet Competition in 1985. The quartet has received honorary degrees from Allegheny College and St. Lawrence University, and Presidential medals from Baruch College (CUNY). They play on a matched set of instruments made in San Francisco by Francis Kuttner (born in Washington, D.C., 1951). This year marks the 30th anniversary of these instruments, known as the Ellen M. Egger Quartet.

Tonight's performance is the first appearance of the Alexander String Quartet on our concerts.

# EVENING SERIES

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## JOYCE YANG

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Blessed with “poetic and sensitive pianism” (*Washington Post*) and a “wondrous sense of color” (*San Francisco Classical Voice*), Grammy-nominated pianist Joyce Yang captivates audiences with her virtuosity, lyricism, and interpretive sensitivity. She first came to international attention in 2005 when she won the silver medal at the 12th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. The youngest contestant at 19 years old, she took home two additional awards: Best Performance of Chamber Music (with the Takács Quartet), and Best Performance of a New Work. In 2006 Ms. Yang made her celebrated New York Philharmonic debut alongside Lorin Maazel at Avery Fisher Hall along with the orchestra’s tour of Asia, making a triumphant return to her hometown of Seoul, South Korea.

Born in 1986, Ms. Yang received her first piano lesson at the age of four from her aunt. She quickly took to the instrument, which she received as a birthday present. Over the next few years she won several national piano competitions in her native country. By the age of ten, she had entered the School of Music at the Korea National University of Arts, and went on to make a number of concerto and recital appearances in Seoul and Daejeon. In 1997, Ms. Yang moved to the United States to begin studies at the pre-college division of the Juilliard School with Dr. Yoheved Kaplinsky, graduating with special honor as the recipient of the school’s 2010 Arthur Rubinstein Prize, and in 2011 she won its 30th Annual William A. Petschek Piano Recital Award. Ms. Yang appears in the film *In the Heart of Music*, a documentary about the 2005 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition.

We last heard Joyce Yang in February 2010 as part of our Piano & Friends series.

This evening’s concert is partially sponsored by the generous contribution of Minna J. Shah.

## TONIGHT’S PROGRAM

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### WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

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*Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, K. 493*

Allegro  
Larghetto  
Allegretto

### SAMUEL ADAMS (b. 1985)

---

*Quintet with Pillars (2018), scored for string quartet and piano prepared with digital resonance (World Premiere)*

Pillar I  
Part I  
Pillar II  
Part II  
Pillar III

## INTERMISSION

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### ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810–1856)

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*Piano Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 44*

Allegro brillante  
In modo d’una Marcia: Un poco largamente  
Scherzo: Molto vivace  
Allegro, ma non troppo

The World Premiere of Samuel Adams’s *Quintet with Pillars* is sponsored by Shirley Chann.

# PROGRAM NOTES

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**THE PIANO UNDERWENT** continuous transformation during the eighteenth century. After its hammer action had been perfected, the player could at last achieve an even tone and a variety of dynamic shadings. However, the instrument was still in a transitional phase of development; the wooden-framed Walter piano owned by Mozart offered rapid and crisp note production but a narrow sonic range that limited the full expression of his ideas. Soon after Mozart's death, piano manufacturers began to experiment successfully with iron frames that allowed for heavier strings, resulting in greater sonority. Lacking this technical advance, Mozart combined the piano with other instruments to reinforce and amplify his chamber concepts.

In 1785 Mozart contracted with his friend and publisher Franz Anton Hoffmeister to write three piano quartets, a new genre that promised to be marketable to the many Viennese amateur pianists. At that time the piano was not a full thematic partner in the ensemble; early chamber works most often used the keyboard to fill out harmonies supporting the string lines. Mozart's two completed piano quartets are breakthrough works in which the piano and the string group achieve equality. The piano score, so virtuosic that it on occasion resembles a concerto, is balanced by equally strong string lines to create a unified chamber work.

Unfortunately for Mozart, Hoffmeister assessed the first of the quartets as being too difficult for his clients, and he declined publication—but he did allow the cash-strapped Mozart to keep the money that had been advanced. For his next piano quartet, K. 493 (1786), he sought out a new venue—Artaria, who became his primary publisher.

K. 493 is cast in E-flat major, for Mozart a warm key that he favored for his more genial works. The exposition of the first movement introduces a profusion of lyrical themes. The main theme, distinguished by an ornamental turn, is first heard in the solo piano and immediately echoed by the violin. In the intricate development the strings explore the main theme as the piano provides harmonic background; its two sections are separated by a unison statement of this theme. All themes are briefly recapitulated, and the concise coda offers a fugal reworking of the main idea.

The Larghetto (A-flat major), in sonata form, develops a pensive melody through exchanges among the three strings and piano. The movement concludes with a serene coda. The Allegretto finale, in sonata rondo form, opens with a theme that has been described as “the purest, most childlike and godlike melody ever sung”; an energetic theme follows in the strings. The brilliant piano score demands virtuosity throughout.

**SAMUEL ADAMS**, son of the Pulitzer Prize-winning composer John Adams, is a composer of acoustic and electroacoustic music. His work has been hailed as “mesmerizing” and “music of a composer with a personal voice and keen imagination” by the *New York Times*, “canny and assured” by the *Chicago Tribune*, and “wondrously alluring” by *The San Francisco Chronicle*. In May 2018 his new Chamber Concerto was premiered by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra to mark the 20th anniversary of the CSO's contemporary series MusicNOW; it was hailed as music of “allusive subtlety and ingenuity” by the *Chicago Tribune*.

Adams grew up in the San Francisco Bay area where he attended Berkeley's Crowden School. He went on to study at Stanford University, where he earned a bachelor's degree with honors in composition and electroacoustic music. He then received a master's degree in composition from Yale University. A committed educator, Adams frequently engages in projects with young musicians; in 2015 he helped to establish the Civic Orchestra New Music Workshop, a program for emerging composers. Adams also works regularly with the students of The Crowden Music Center (Berkeley) and maintains a private teaching studio.

From the composer: “*Quintet with Pillars* explores the question: what would it sound like if a piece were to build itself? To answer this question, I first had to construct the ‘piece’ (Part II) before pulling it apart to reveal the process of its becoming (Part I), making much of the compositional process similar to solving a temporal puzzle. Three short episodes—or pillars—buttress the larger musical arc and serve as markers for the beginning, middle, and end of the form.



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## “*Quintet with Pillars* explores the question: what would it sound like if a piece were to build itself?”

SAMUEL ADAMS

“Much to my surprise, writing this work was an emotionally-charged experience propelled not so much by the joy of creation (though I enjoyed composing it immensely) but by an urgency to make things whole again.

“I began sketching *Quintet with Pillars* in the spring of 2018 and completed the score the following October. My deepest gratitude to the Alexander String Quartet and Joyce Yang for their intrepid spirits bringing this music to life.”

*Quintet with Pillars* was commissioned by the Arizona Friends of Chamber Music and sponsored by Shirley Chann; The Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts, UC Davis; San Francisco Performances; and Soka University of America, for the Alexander Quartet and Joyce Yang.

EARLY IN HIS CAREER, Schumann often crafted groups of works in specific genres during intense binges of writing. In 1840, the year of his marriage to Clara Wieck against the vehement protests of her father, he created over 100 songs. The following year was devoted to symphonies. In 1842, guided by an inner voice that advised him to write chamber works, he created his three string quartets and his Opus 44 Piano Quintet. Written in the fervent heart of inspiration, the creation of these works exhausted Schumann. Shortly after their completion, he suffered the first of his mental breakdowns. Clara attributed his collapse to overwork and arranged for a stay at a Bohemian spa. However, he remained in fragile mental health for the duration of his brief life.

Schumann’s Opus 44 Piano Quintet is regarded as one of the finest creations of 1842, his “chamber music year.” At the time he composed these chamber works, he closely studied the compositional

techniques of Haydn and Mozart—thus the intensely emotional and romantic Quintet develops formally according to an established classical design. The Quintet was dedicated to Clara, who expected to play its substantial piano part at the premiere. However, she fell ill, and Schumann’s friend and colleague Felix Mendelssohn performed in her place. He subsequently suggested revisions, to which Schumann agreed. Robert even replaced a substantial part of his third movement with livelier “Mendelssohnian” themes.

Because the Quintet was written for the virtuoso Clara, it features a massive piano part and a broadly orchestral string score that provides a counterbalance. The work opens with a bold statement of the principal theme—a clearly profiled motif that recurs throughout the movement and again at the coda of the finale as a unifying device for the entire composition. The second theme is a reflective dialogue between the viola and cello. Both themes undergo a classically formal development, lavishly ornamented with virtuoso piano runs, and a recapitulation of ideas.

The somber character of the opening movement’s second theme pervades the *Un poco largamente* (C minor). Described by Schumann as written “in the style of a march,” the movement conjures a stately procession. Strongly contrasting lyrical and dramatic episodes are interspersed between statements of the main theme, presented by the first violin after a brief piano introduction.

The Scherzo opens with an E-flat major scale pattern that is varied and repeated by all instruments. It offers two contrasting trio sections, the first of which explores a contemplative theme; the second trio inverts this melody, now accompanied by rapid figuration.

The robust finale develops both an emphatic motif, “always strongly marked,” and a quieter second theme. As a departure from tradition, the movement opens in C minor and reaches its tonic key of E-flat only after the third statement of the main theme. The remarkable coda introduces two fugal sections, each recapitulating elements heard earlier in the work.

Notes by Nancy Monsman

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## *Mozart Songbook*

JOAN LARKIN

Outside on Fremont Ave, black  
snow and no such thing as a  
white wig or a lovestruck violet  
who sings his heart out. My lungs  
ached, huge with breath and the harsh  
sweetness of strange words. *Veilchen*,  
*Mädchen*—my brother spoke them  
to show how my tongue was a gate  
that could open secrets. He pressed  
keys partway, to draw softest sounds  
from the upright, and what he loved  
I loved. That was my whole faith then.



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

**POETRY CENTER**

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thanks to those  
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campaign.

# TUCSON WINTER CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

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Buy your tickets now for the  
26th Festival, a week of  
world-class concerts that  
begins March 3rd.

Highlights include Australian saxophonist Amy Dickson's Tucson debut with the US premiere of Ross Edwards's new quintet. Also in his Tucson debut, pianist James Giles will perform the monumental Taneyev Piano Quartet.

A first at the Festival will be Chris Rogerson's new work written for the Escher Quartet. Look for violist Ettore Causa in an impressive selection of Brahms's Lieder, and cellist Edward Aron performing "Air" from the Pulitzer Prize winning composer Kevin Puts.

Violinist Axel Strauss and pianist Bernadette Harvey will perform 20th-century composer Grażyna Bacewicz's *Partita for Violin and Piano*. Also returning is violinist and Yale School of Music professor Ani Kavafian, who appeared in our first Festival in 1994.

This year's Festival also has a slight Russian theme, so the Taneyev Quartet will be augmented by the Shostakovich Quintet, Schnittke Quintet, and the rarely performed Arensky Quartet for two cellos.

## FESTIVAL MUSICIANS

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Peter Rejto, *Artistic Director*

Escher String Quartet (Adam Barnett-Hart, *violin*;  
Danbi Um, *violin*; Pierre Lapointe, *viola*;  
Brook Speltz, *cello*)

Philip Alejo, *double bass*

Edward Arron, *cello*

Ettore Causa, *viola*

Amy Dickson, *saxophone*

James Giles, *piano*

Bernadette Harvey, *piano*

Ani Kavafian, *violin*

Chris Rogerson, *composer*

Axel Strauss, *violin*

## CONCERT 1

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Sunday, March 3, 2019

3:00 pm, Leo Rich Theater

Mozart – *String Quintet in C Major, K. 515*

Prokofiev – *Sonata for Two Violins in C Major, Op. 56*

Philip Glass – *Violin Sonata (arranged for Saxophone)*

Shostakovich – *Piano Quintet, Op. 57*

## CONCERT 2

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Tuesday, March 5, 2019

7:30 pm, Leo Rich Theater

Mozart – *Piano Quartet in G Minor, K. 478*

Bartók – *String Quartet No. 5*

Ludwig van Beethoven – *Piano Trio in B-Flat Major*  
("Archduke"), Op. 97

## CONCERT 3

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Wednesday, March 6, 2019

7:30 pm, Leo Rich Theater

Shostakovich – *Two Pieces for String Octet, Op. 11*

Edwards – *Quintet for Saxophone and Strings*,  
"Bright Birds and Sorrows"

Bacewicz – *Partita for Violin and Piano*

Arensky – *String Quartet No. 2 in A Minor, Op. 35*

## CONCERT 4

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Friday, March 8, 2019

7:30 pm, Leo Rich Theater

Jenő Takács – *Two Fantastics*

Alfred Schnittke – *Piano Quintet*

Kevin Puts – *Air for Cello and Piano*

Taneyev – *Piano Quartet in E Major, Op. 20*

## CONCERT 5

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Sunday, March 10, 2019

3:00 pm, Leo Rich Theater

Kevin Puts – *Oboe Concerto (arranged for Saxophone)*

Brahms – *Lieder (arranged for Viola and Piano)*

Chris Rogerson – *String Quartet*

Mendelssohn – *Sextet in D Major, Op. 110*





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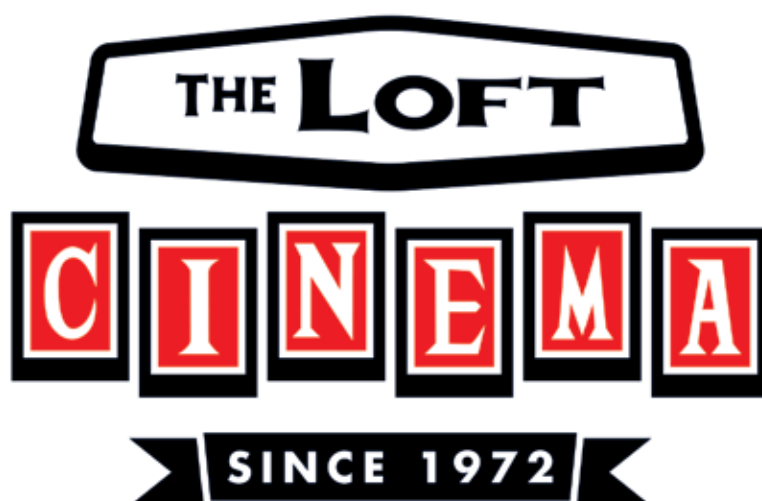
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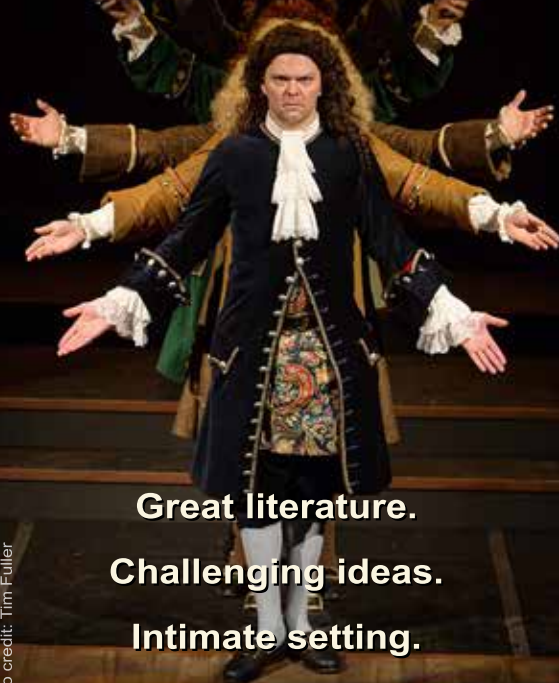
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**November 17 & 18, 2018** – Bernstein's *Candide* Overture, Arutiunian's challenging Trumpet Concerto, Jobim's chart-topping *Girl from Ipanema* and Borodin's Symphony No. 2.

**February 2 & 3, 2019** – Brahms' Double Concerto for Violin and Cello plus two works by Mendelssohn – The Hebrides (inspired by a visit to a sea cave in Scotland) and Symphony No. 5, *The Reformation*.

**March 2 & 3, 2019** – Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld*, inspired by Greek mythology, plus the premiere of White's Concertino, Dukas' spritely *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* and Rimsky-Korsakov's Capriccio Espagnol.

**April 6 & 7, 2019** – Suppé's *The Beautiful Galathea* Overture and classics by Mozart – his final Violin Concerto, known as *The Turkish*, and his *Coronation Mass*, with SASO Chorus.

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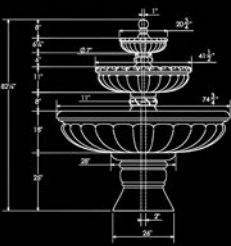
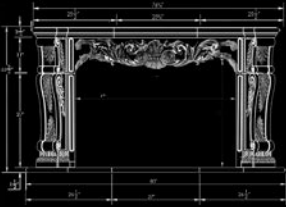
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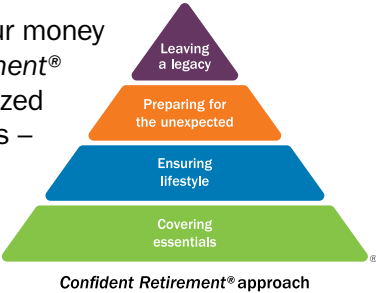
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