



**GRAND VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY**[®]

**DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC,
THEATRE, AND DANCE**

Symphony Orchestra

Dr. Joel Schut, conductor

7:30 P.M.

Wednesday, February 25, 2025

Louis Armstrong Theatre

Haas Center for Performing Arts

GVSU Allendale Campus

Program

Polonia Overture in C Major (1836)

Richard Wagner (1813-1883)

In collaboration with the College of Education and Community Innovation to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Grand Valley's partnership with the Krakow University of Economics

Prelude in C minor Op. 28, No. 20 (1839/2026)

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)
Arr. Tom Haydock (2020)

*GVSU Saxophone Ensemble
Dan Graser, Conductor*

Acrisure Ampitheater Recording Project (2026)

Hugo Bombardier
Orch. Theron Kay

Piano Concerto No. 2 in C Minor, Op. 18
(1901)

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

III. Allegro scherzando

*Mijeung Lee, piano
Concerto Competition Winner*

-Intermission-

An American in Paris (1928)

George Gershwin (1896-1937)
Arr. Frank Campbell Watson

Soloist Bio:

Mijeung Lee, born in South Korea in 2004, is a pianist currently studying at Grand Valley State University in Michigan with Dr. Helen Marlais. She moved to the United States in 2023 after graduating from a prominent Arts High School in Korea. Mijeung has earned top prizes in numerous competitions in the United States and in S. Korea. She won the Grand Rapids Youth Symphony Piano Concerto Competition and performed the first movement of the Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 2 in February, 2025. She also received first prize at the Music International Grand Prix, with a performance at Merkin Hall in New York. Her additional honors include first place in the Northern Lights Piano Festival & Competition; first place for piano and second place overall in the Musicians' Club of Women National Competition in Chicago. Mijeung was invited to perform again for the MCW in Chicago in December, 2025. She also won the Grand Prize and Brilliant Performance Award at the 21st Century Talents Music Competition in Toronto; and third prize in the Artist Group at the American Virtuoso International Music Competition. Mijeung is recipient of the Grand Rapids Musicians League Zeman Award and most recently won the Grand Valley State University Concerto Competition. She has also performed at the Gilmore KeysFest in Kalamazoo, Michigan. In addition to solo performance, Mijeung is active in ensemble work and collaborates with many instrumentalists. She also teaches pre-college piano students and enjoys sharing music through performing and teaching.

Personnel Roster

Violin 1	Double Bass	Horn
Noah Abdelkader	Alex Barrett	Eli Gibson
Rebekah Doody ø	Cullen DeCou* ø	John Johnson+
Maggie Fisher	Iris Eppinga	Brendan Reed*
Andrew Kales* ø	Jovany Hernandez	Elizabeth Slabaugh*
Danielle Meyers ø	Andrew Lunn	
Jocelynn Pierce ø	Samantha Rometty	Trumpet
Aveline Schienke* ø		Donovan Ford ø
Kenneth Walker	Piccolo	Andrews Lasceski ø
	Jillaena Weesies	Mia Kolhoff* ø
Violin 2		Alejandro Zorrilla
Esther Bard ø	Flute	
Vera Bresser	Julia Meyer	Trombone
Willow Davidson	Grace Morrison* ø	Micah Babinski
Daniel Lesinski		Matt Keith*
Priscilla Martin	Oboe	Elizabeth Phillips
Danny Parker	Lea Carter	
Kayla Shook	Kayla Hieb	Tuba
Avery Trimble* ø	Elisa Skinner*	Jorge Gonzalez
Aiden Zemaitis		
Viola	English Horn	Timpani
Emma Cornish	Kayla Hieb	Zachary Haverkamp* ø
Sarah Johncox	Clarinet	Percussion
Braedyn MacKeller	Lilly Childers	Thomas Cordes
Cruz Peña* ø	Sophia Janiga	Ash Martinez-Lopez
Xavaier Williams	Maddox Lewis*	Dyami Campos
		Brayden VanderWall
Cello	Bass Clarinet	Ramses Arispe
Seamus Adams	Maddie Sanborn	
Giselle Balivet ø	Bassoon	Celeste
Maria Benítez-Sabino ø	Simon Furton*	Samual Bergman ø
Jake Doctor*	Tanner Reynolds*	
Megan Ferenczhalmy		*Section Principal
Grace Jenkins	Saxophone	+Guest Artist
Nyx Johnson	Jeremy Cleary (alto)	ø Graduating or
Aiden Mack	Caleb Peckham (tenor)	pre-service teaching
Gabrielle Peck	David Grimard ø (baritone)	next semester
Tyleur Wright		

Names are listed in alphabetical order to emphasize the contribution of each player

GVSU Saxophone Ensemble
 Soprano: Jeremy Cleary, Seth Kane
 Alto: Isaac Wright, Jacob Wegner, Jason Holmes
 Tenor: Caleb Peckham, Connor Brendel, John Larue
 Baritone: David Grimard, Hailey Petersen, Zane Stoner

Program Notes

Wagner – Polonia Overture

Polonia (WWV 39) is a concert overture by Richard Wagner, completed in 1836, though some scholars believe it may have been sketched as early as 1832. According to Wagner, the piece was inspired by a “dreamlike evening” in Leipzig, where he heard a continuous stream of Polish songs—including the national anthem Poland Is Not Yet Lost—during celebrations for Constitution Day on May 3, 1832. He later composed the overture in Berlin between May and July 1836, and it received its premiere the following winter in Königsberg. Written in sonata form, the work incorporates elements drawn from Polish folk music.

Wagner took the manuscript with him to Paris in 1839 and believed it had been lost there. However, it was returned to him three decades later, in 1869, by the conductor Jules Pasdeloup. Reflecting on the piece in a Christmas Day conversation with his wife Cosima in 1881, Wagner remarked that it would have made a powerful impression if performed by a military band for the public, as he had originally imagined.

Chopin - Prelude in C minor Op. 28, No. 20

Program notes announced from the stage

Bombardier - Acrisure Amphitheater Recording Project notes announced from the stage.

Program notes announced from the stage

Rachmaninoff - Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18

The teenaged Sergei Prokofiev, already a discerning pianist and critic, described Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto as “a very beautiful and famous concerto...it begins with chords, and then a broad theme do-re-do.” The concerto does open dramatically, with a series of rich piano solo chords tolling like bells for eight measures in F major, before the orchestra enters with the surging main “do-re-do” (C-D-C) theme in C minor. Another Russian pianist, Nikolai Medtner, called this dynamic, sobbing motif “one of the most strikingly Russian of themes. There is no ethnographic trimming here, no dressing up, no decking out in national dress, no folksong intonation, and yet every time, from the first bell stroke, you feel the figure of Russia rising up to her full height.”

Oddly, Rachmaninoff completed the last two movements of the concerto first and performed them at a concert in Moscow in December 1900. He finished the first movement in April 1901 and played the solo part at the premiere of the full concerto the following autumn.

Its enthusiastic reception roused the famously moody composer out of his depression since the disastrous premiere of his First Symphony in 1897—Rachmaninoff dedicated the concerto to Dr. Nikolai Dahl, who had helped him overcome his crippling feelings of inferiority and insecurity. The work firmly established his reputation in Russia and enjoyed immediate success abroad, too, both with and without the composer at the keyboard.

The high level of inspiration evident in the opening bars never flags. A second, more lyrical, theme provides contrast, along with a seven-note march motif developed dramatically in a climactic *maestoso* section, where the piano thunders rhythmic chords over the main theme in the orchestra. The notable absence of a cadenza for the soloist creates a flowing continuity. The first movement's themes reappear later at strategic moments.

In the second movement, the mood changes, dominated by a slow, pastoral theme in E major and 4/4 meter, but with surprising offbeat stresses in the accompaniment. A fast, marching theme opens the finale, before Rachmaninoff introduces what became one of his most popular melodies in the oboe and violas, a sad and swooping theme that is languid and richly colored. Passed several times almost unchanged between soloist and orchestra, it yields to a breathless coda that breaks the dreamy mood. Throughout, soloist and orchestra are harmonious partners, never competitors, and the supply of slightly melancholy (but never lugubrious) lyricism seems endless.

Over the years, the concerto entered the realm of popular culture. Buddy Kaye and Ted Mossman adapted the last movement's second theme into the croony song "Full Moon and Empty Arms," recorded by the young Frank Sinatra, while the second movement inspired Eric Carmen's ballad "All by Myself," made famous by Celine Dion. Scores for film—*Grand Hotel*, *Brief Encounter*, and *The Seven Year Itch*—also feature its music.

-Note by Harlow Robinson

Gershwin – An American in Paris

Since his early teens, Gershwin had been enamored with the music he heard uptown in Harlem, a part of Manhattan that was quickly becoming the center of the jazz universe. His first attempt at a more serious composition—the one-act opera *Blue Monday*—was about characters in a Harlem nightclub. Its first presentation on Broadway, with white singers performing in blackface, was a flop and received only one performance.

The undaunted Gershwin's next try at a classical/jazz merging was for Paul Whiteman's "An Experiment in Modern Music" concert in February 1924. That piece is now known as *Rhapsody in Blue*. He followed this with his *Concerto in F*, which some writers called "The Jazz Piano Concerto."

These two works were popular, though critics were still guarded with their praise.

A trip abroad inspired Gershwin to work in earnest on a commission he had received from the New York Philharmonic. His idea for the new work solidified as he was shopping for Parisian taxi horns to take back to the U.S.: Capture the tumult of Paris' streets in music and create a concert work that didn't center on the piano.

Back in New York, Gershwin finished *An American in Paris*, which he subtitled "A Tone Poem for Orchestra." In an interview in the August 18, 1928, edition of *Musical America*, he said, "This new piece, really a rhapsodic ballet, is written very freely and is the most modern music I have yet attempted." He also gave a brief "program note" of the work: "The opening gay section is followed by a rich 'blues' with a strong rhythmic undercurrent. Our American...perhaps after strolling into a café and having a few drinks, has suddenly succumbed to a spasm of homesickness. The harmony here is both more intense and simple than in the preceding pages. This 'blues' rises to a climax followed by a coda in which the spirit of the music returns to the vivacity and bubbling exuberance of the opening part with its impressions of Paris. Apparently the homesick American, having left the café and reached the open air, has downed his spell of the blues and once again is an alert spectator of Parisian life. At the conclusion, the street noises and French atmosphere are triumphant."

Though still not a critical success, *An American in Paris* was wildly and widely embraced by audiences—and Hollywood—and established Gershwin as an original voice in concert halls worldwide, a voice that resonates to this day.

-Note by Dave Kopplin

GVSU Music Faculty

Corie Auger
Christopher Belland
Rachael Bergan
Colin Bianchi
Mark Buchner
Arthur Campbell
Paul Carlson
Sookkyung Cho
Greg Crowell
Michael Drost
Lisa Feurzeig
Beth Gibbs
Patricia Gordon

Samuel Gould
Dan Graser
Gary June
Olivia Kieffer
Andrew Lenhart
Pablo Mahave-Veglia
Helen Marlais
Barry Martin
John Martin
Chuck Norris
Victoria Olson
Ryan Christianson

Danny Phipps
Bill Ryan
Joel Schut
Greg Secor
Kathryn Stieler
Paul Swantek
James Thompson
Kevin Tutt
Marlen Vavříková
Mark Williams
Alex Wilson
Yu Xin
Molly York

Upcoming MTD Events

Feb. 13th-22nd in LAT

Feb. 24th @ 7:30 p.m. in LAT

Feb. 27th @ 7:30 p.m. in LAT

Mar. 1st @ 5:00 p.m. in SVS

Mar. 16th @ 7:30 p.m. in SVS

Mar. 24th @ 7:30 p.m. in SVS

Mar. 27th-Apr. 4th in LAT

Mar. 31st @ 7:30 p.m. in LAT

Apr. 6th @ 7:30 p.m. in SVS

She Loves Me dir. by Katherine Clemons

Jazz Ensembles Concert

Wind Symphony Concert

Faculty Artist Recital: Dr. James Thompson

GVPCS: Finding America, Program #4

Faculty Artist Recital: Paul Carlson

Five Mile Lake dir. by Demetria Thomas

Guest Artist Recital: Bent Frequency Duo

Faculty/Guest Artist Recital: Amoso Duo

For updated information on Music, Theatre, and Dance events, please visit
www.gvsu.edu/mtd.

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