



**ÆTERNA SIRIUS
IN CONCERT**

JESSICA YAM
ELIAS-AXEL PETTERSSON
DUO PIANO

A Note from Æterna Sirius

Dear Southwest Music Lovers,

We are excited to present our first series of concerts as a duo! After many painstaking minutes of discussion, we came to an agreement on our eventual program. The first half, all four-hand music, features nationalistic dances by Brahms (German), Grieg (Norwegian), and Dvořák (Czech). After this, we will present Rachmaninoff's monumental Second Suite for Two Pianos, Op. 17. When a second piano is not available, we will perform solo works, including works by Liszt, Schubert, and Franck.

Æterna Sirius formed in 2017 when former classmates Jessica Yam and Elias-Axel Pettersson decided to join forces in presenting four-hand and two-piano music. Both pianists met in 2002 as students of Douglas Humpherys at the Eastman School of Music. Upon graduation, they parted ways, only to reconnect briefly in 2006 during an audition weekend in Cleveland. Time intervened again, until 2017, when Elias visited Arizona and reconnected with Jessica after an 11-year hiatus. Æterna Sirius was born.

Enjoy the music!

Warm Regards,

Æterna Sirius

Jessica Yam & Elias-Axel Pettersson

Friday, January 5 at 7:00 PM

At the home of Dr. Christopher Perez and Stephen Coker

Chaz Salazar, Flute
*Jessica Yam, Piano
**Elias-Axel Pettersson, Piano

An Evening of Music

Impromptu No. 3 in G^b Major, Op. 90** Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

Sonata for Flute and Piano (1927)** Erwin Schulhoff
(1894-1942)
I. *Allegro moderato*
II. *Scherzo: Allegro giocoso*
III. *Aria: Andante*
IV. *Rondo-Finale: Allegro molto gajo*

Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8 in F[#] Minor, S. 244* Franz Liszt
(1811-1886)

—Intermission—

Suite de trois morceaux pour flute et piano, Op. 116** Benjamin Godard
(1849-1895)
II. *Idylle*

Hungarian Dances for Piano Four Hands, WoO 1 Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)
Book I: No. 3 in F Major—*Allegretto*
Book II: No. 7 in A Major—*Allegro-Vivo*
Book IV: No. 17 in F[#] Minor—*Andantino-Vivace*
Book I: No. 1 in G Minor—*Allegro molto*

Norwegian Dances for Piano Four Hands, Op. 35 Edvard Grieg
(1843-1907)
No. 1 in D Minor—*Allegro moderato*
No. 2 in A Major—*Allegretto tranquillo e grazioso*
No. 3 in G Major—*Allegro moderato alla marcia*
No. 4 in D Major—*Allegro molto*

Slavonic Dances for Piano Four Hands Antonín Dvořák
(1841-1904)
Book II: Op. 72, No. 2 in E Minor—*Starodávnyj (ancient dance)*
Book I: Op. 46, No. 1 in C Major—*Furiant (Bohemian dance)*

*Out of respect for the performers and audience members, please turn off all electronic devices.
Enter and exit only during applause. Thank you.*

Sunday, January 7 at 1:00 PM
Camelback Christian Church in Scottsdale

Sunday, January 14 at 5:00 PM
Arizona State University School of Music's Katzin Concert Hall
Please stay for a reception in the lobby following the performance.

Tuesday, January 16 at 7:30 PM
Arizona Piano Institute's Central United Methodist Church in Phoenix

Æterna Sirius
Jessica Yam, Piano
Elias-Axel Pettersson, Piano

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—Intermission—

Suite No. 2 in C Major for Two Pianos, Op. 17 Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)
I. *Introduction: Alla marcia* in C Major
II. *Valse: Presto* in G Major
III. *Romance: Andantino* in A^b Major
IV. *Tarantelle: Presto* in C Minor

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Sunday, January 7 at 3:30 PM
First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mesa

Friday, January 12 at 2:00 PM
Brookdale Tempe

Æterna Sirius

*Jessica Yam, Piano

**Elias-Axel Pettersson, Piano

Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8 in F# Minor, S. 244* Franz Liszt
(1811-1886)

Prelude, Chorale et Fugue** César Franck
(1822-1890)

—Intermission—

Hungarian Dances for Piano Four Hands, WoO 1 Johannes Brahms
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Monday, January 15 at 6:00 PM

Arizona Piano Institute's Central United Methodist Church in Phoenix

Æterna Sirius

Jessica Yam, Piano

Elias-Axel Pettersson, Piano

Masterclass I

Transcendental Etude No. 10 in F Minor, S.139

Franz Liszt
(1811-1886)

Mikayla Rogers

Student of Dr. Frank Scott

French Suite No. 2 in C Minor, BWV 813

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

VI. *Menuet II*

VII. *Gigue*

Braedi Mecham

Student of Olga Gorelik

Nocturne in E^b Major, Op. 9, No. 2

Fryderyk Chopin
(1810-1849)

Joey Hu

Student of Dr. Jessica Yam

Scherzo No. 2 in B^b Minor, Op. 31

Fryderyk Chopin
(1810-1849)

Alex Tam

Student of Snezana Krstic

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Wednesday, January 17 at 7:30 PM
Arizona Piano Institute's Central United Methodist Church in Phoenix

Æterna Sirius

Jessica Yam, Piano
Elias-Axel Pettersson, Piano

Masterclass II

Prelude and Fugue No. 21 in B^b Major, BWV 866 Johann Sebastian Bach
From *The Well-Tempered Clavier I* (1685-1750)
Andrew Wilson
Student of Dr. John Yoontae Hwang

Waltz in A Minor, Op. Posthumous Fryderyk Chopin
 (1810-1849)
Lilly Potter
Student of Olga Gorelik

Fantasy in F[#] Minor, Op. 28 Felix Mendelssohn
 (1809-1847)
Anthony Wilson
Student of Dr. John Yoontae Hwang

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Program Notes

Franz Schubert's Impromptu No. 3 in G^b Major, Op. 90

Born in Vienna, Schubert was prolific, composing symphonies, operas, chamber and solo piano music, and over 600 lieder. Today, his genius seems obvious—his beautiful singing melodic lines and rich harmonic language are of the highest order—but during his own lifetime, he was only appreciated among the musical elite. Schubert composed two sets of Impromptus: Op. 90 and Op. 142 (both were composed in 1827, but the latter was published posthumously). Though each Impromptu can stand alone, Op. 90 represents an organic unification, much like a four-movement sonata or symphony. The Third Impromptu was originally published in G Major to increase sheet music sales. Nineteenth-century middle- and upper-class women were expected to pursue various “feminine” activities like the piano; as such, G Major—one sharp—was considered easier to read than G^b Major—six flats. Ironically, the piece fits the hand much better in the original key! This is a masterful “song without words” and is justifiably one of Schubert’s most-often performed works.

Erwin Schulhoff's Sonata for Flute and Piano (1927)

Schulhoff was born in Prague into a German-Jewish family. Dvořák encouraged his early musical studies; he later studied privately with the likes of Claude Debussy, Max Reger, Fritz Steinbach, and Willi Thern. During World War I, Schulhoff served in the Austro-Hungarian army on the Russian front. He was wounded, captured, and spent the remainder of the war in an Italian prisoner-of-war camp. He briefly lived in Germany before returning to Prague in 1923, where he joined the faculty at the Prague Conservatory in 1929. During the 1930s, he faced mounting personal and professional obstacles due to his Jewish heritage and radical political beliefs. He was labeled a “degenerate” and was black-listed by the Nazis. Additionally, he became a target in his native Czechoslovakia after composing works like *The Communist Manifesto*, Op. 82. In 1941, the Soviet Union approved his petition for citizenship, but he never made it out of Czechoslovakia. He was arrested and deported to the Würzburg Concentration Camp, where he died of tuberculosis in 1942.

Schulhoff was one of the first European composers to find inspiration in jazz idioms and rhythms. He also embraced Dadaism and the avant-garde. The Sonata for Flute and Piano is quite accessible, and runs the gamut of emotions, from serious and dark (chromatic and quasi-atonal) to jovial and humorous, bordering on parody and caricature. The third movement is especially gripping. The figuration in the piano is stark and static, like the view of an empty

battlefield. Surges of clashing harmonies accompany whimsical flute flurries: an ironic juxtaposition—perhaps Schulhoff's view of war.

Franz Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8 in F# Minor, S. 244

Despite his affinity for Magyar (Hungarian) culture, Liszt hardly spoke the language of his father's people. Yet he wrote 19 Hungarian Rhapsodies based on his visits to Hungary in 1840 and 1846. He documented his compositional thoughts on these trips, which he later expanded and developed into full-blown works. The Magyars accepted "Tziganes" or "Gypsies" (English terms for the Romani, or Roma people, which are often seen as derogatory) as national musicians. The music has the uncanny ability to portray warlike vigor and deep sorrow. Liszt's Rhapsodies evoke the Tzigane spirit through rhythm, meter, harmonic structure, articulation, accentuation, dynamics, and tempo. The double-harmonic scales (raised fourth and seventh scale degrees of the natural minor scale), captures the essence of this heart-wrenching music. In addition, Liszt stayed true to the *lassan* (slow) and *friska* (fast) elements of Gypsy-style improvisation.

Benjamin Godard's Suite de trois morceaux pour flute et piano, Op. 116

Godard was a French violinist and composer of Jewish descent. In his short lifetime, he composed eight operas, five symphonies, two violin concertos, string quartets, piano pieces, various chamber works, and more than 100 songs. His musical style was akin to Mendelssohn and Schumann, which is perhaps why Godard was so critical of his contemporary Richard Wagner (though Wagner's antisemitism surely played a role in this opinion). His immensely popular *Suite, Op. 116* is masterful in its combination of the two timbres. The second movement, *Idylle*, features a flowing piano accompaniment and a soaring flute melody, which is sometimes picked up by the pianist. The dynamic fluctuations mimic the harmonic rhythm and even respect the registers of both instruments. The work paints a truly timeless scene.

Johannes Brahms's Hungarian Dances for Piano Four Hands, WoO 1

The Hungarian Dances are a set of 21 lively vignettes based mostly on Hungarian themes. Though the field of ethnomusicology is quite new—it really started quantitatively with Bartók and Kodály—Brahms and others like him were thoroughly influenced by traveling musicians who performed on street corners, at fairs, and in the countryside. Brahms loosely drew his inspiration

from these melodies and rhythms, though purists consider that there are three types of traditional folk tunes and rhythms from the region. Brahms originally composed his works for piano four hands, which he completed in 1869, separating the dances into four books. He later arranged the first 10 dances for solo piano and orchestrated Nos. 1, 3, and 10. Subsequent composers arranged the other dances for orchestra, among them Dvořák (whose Slavonic Dances owe a debt of gratitude to Brahms), Paul Juon, and recently, Iván Fischer. The rhythms of the Hungarian Dances also influenced the development of ragtime.

Edvard Grieg's Norwegian Dances for Piano Four Hands, Op. 35

Grieg's Four Norwegian Dances are mostly based on tunes he found in a folk song collection by Ludvig Mathias Lindeman entitled "Mountain Melodies Old and New." Like Brahms and Dvořák, Grieg composed his works for piano four hands. They were later brilliantly orchestrated by the Czech conductor Hans Sitt. All the dances are in simple ternary form. Taken together, they form a quasi-symphonic work. The jaunty melodies, modal borrowings, and intervallic leaps evoke the Nordic countryside. The second dance is more popular; versions with various lyrics have been passed down through the generations.

Antonín Dvořák's Slavonic Dances for Piano Four Hands

Originally composed for piano four hands, Dvořák's Slavonic Dances are a set of 16 pieces composed in 1878 (Op. 46) and 1886 (Op. 72). Inspired by Brahms's Hungarian Dances, these works are lively and full of nationalistic fervor. An important difference is that, whereas Brahms used actual Hungarian folk melodies, Dvořák only used characteristic Slavic rhythms, composing his own melodies to fit the quirky, jagged patterns. Along with the "New World" Symphony, the Slavonic Dances are among the composer's most famous and memorable works. Soon after their first printing, Fritz Simrock (who became Dvořák's publisher at Brahms's behest) requested an orchestral arrangement. A virtually unknown composer, Dvořák became a household name after the publication of his first set, prompting Simrock to request the second. The works now find their way into popular culture through movies and other media.

Sergei Rachmaninoff's Suite No. 2 in C Major for Two Pianos, Op. 17

The year was 1897. It was the premiere of a new symphony. Following poorly allocated rehearsal time, an orchestra conducted by Alexander Glazunov—known for his frequent drunken bouts—presented Rachmaninoff's first

symphonic attempt in a long-running series of Russian Symphony Concerts. It was a disaster. César Cui, critic and nationalist composer who was part of “The Five” (*Moguchaya kuchka*), brutally panned the work, claiming it depicted the ten plagues of Egypt. Rachmaninoff was justifiably affected and fell into a three-year depression, composing little and conducting to make ends meet. In 1900, after insistence from family, Rachmaninoff sought help from Nikolai Dahl, who administered hypnotherapy and psychotherapy. The results were almost immediate, and as a form of thanks, Rachmaninoff composed his Second Piano Concerto that year and dedicated it to Dahl.

With his composition juices reignited, and inspired by his time in Italy in 1901, Rachmaninoff began earnest work on a suite for two pianos. The *Introduction* is an exuberant march that presents many technical and musical challenges. The middle section features one of Rachmaninoff’s most memorable melodies in the second piano part, accompanied by filigree in the first part. The *Valse* is a whirlwind: the melody in thirds is split between both pianists in the upper register with various accompanying figures in the bass. The *Romance* is a true dialogue between the two pianists, who take turns with the melody, which intertwines with countermelody and accompaniment. The *Tarantelle* is a blistering dance of death, requiring lightning-quick reactions and character changes. Rachmaninoff premiered the work with his cousin Alexander Siloti on November 24, 1901. In the early 1940s, just before Rachmaninoff died, he and Vladimir Horowitz were at a party in Los Angeles and performed the piece. It was their first and last time.

César Franck’s Prelude, Chorale et Fugue

Franck was a gifted Belgian organist, pianist, and composer—talents his parents exploited in an era that feted child prodigies. His compositional style matured slowly; his emphasis on sound, color, and balance influenced future composers, notably Debussy. Franck also laid the foundations of a significant 19th-century French cultural phenomenon: teacher-pupil groups (*bande à Franck*). His students included d’Indy, Dukas, Duparc, and Lekeu, among others.

The *Prelude, Chorale et Fugue* is a multi-layered and structured work, showcasing Franck’s penchant for refined counterpoint, cyclic form, and chromatic harmonic language. The first theme enters slightly askew, propelling the pulse. Tonally, the theme ascends chromatically to an overt expression of sadness and longing. The arrival is one of Franck’s most memorable theme, which leads into the *Chorale*, a timeless chasm of complex harmonies and suspensions. After a lengthy, semi-structured/improvised cadenza (no doubt inspired by the organ), the towering fugue enters. Franck deftly concludes the work by combining the themes from all three previous sections.

Biographies

A Phoenix native, **Chaz Salazar** completed a Master's degree in Flute Performance from Arizona State University as a Reach for the Stars Fellow. He has performed in masterclasses for Jeanne Baxtresser (New York Philharmonic) and Jeffrey Khaner (Philadelphia Orchestra), among others. He has participated in various summer festivals, including Eastern Music Festival, InterHarmony International Music Festival, and the Pacific Region International Summer Music Academy, where he worked with Arthur Arnold, Chief Conductor of the Moscow Symphony Orchestra.

Salazar began private flute lessons at age 13 through Rosie's House: A Music Academy for Children, which provides free private lessons to children from low-income families. Salazar currently teaches flute for a similar program called Harmony Project Phoenix, which is inspired by the Venezuelan's El Sistema, a national youth orchestra program. As a performer, Salazar aspires to join a major symphony orchestra; as a teacher, he will always share his love of music with his students.

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Pianist **Jessica J. Yam** has an active career as a soloist and collaborative musician. *Æterna Sirius* is a piano duo partnership she formed recently with Montréal-based pianist Elias-Axel Pettersson. With tenor Bernard Holcomb, an alumnus of the Lyric Opera of Chicago's Ryan Opera Center, she also established Holcomb-Yam Duo, a project dedicated to song literature. She was also the pianist for Windy City Opera's inaugural production of Puccini's *La Bohème*. Her orchestral engagements include performances with the New England Philharmonic, Baltimore Symphony, and Young People's Symphony Orchestras. Yam was one of two national recipients of the Chopin Foundation of the United States Scholarship in the early 2000s.

As Vice President of Arizona Piano Institute, a non-profit organization, Yam directs a distinguished summer festival for preparatory and collegiate students—the only one of its kind in the Southwest—which hosts internationally-acclaimed faculty-artists. Among several competitions and events, Yam has adjudicated, directed, and assisted in major programs for Arizona State Music Teachers Association, Steinway/Avanti Piano Competition, Southwest Piano Festival, and the Chopin Foundation of the United States.

Yam received training from New England Conservatory, Eastman School of

Music, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and Arizona State University. Her primary teachers include Robert Hamilton, Douglas Humpherys, Faina Kofman, and Yoshikazu Nagai.

Currently, Dr. Yam is on faculty at ASU and teaches privately in her Tempe studio. She was formerly piano professor at Southwestern College. In addition to concertizing and teaching, Yam organizes benefit concerts and remains active in community service.

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Hailed for his “breathtaking virtuosity and an intelligent sense of precisely what brings music to life” (Albuquerque Journal) and his “rhythmic integrity, singing tone quality, and refinement” (Clavier), Swedish-American pianist **Elias-Axel Pettersson** has established himself as a formidable soloist, chamber musician, and pedagogue. A Mason & Hamlin Concert Artist, he has garnered prizes on the national and international level, and has been heard on national radio.

Pettersson has collaborated with various artists, including violinists Krzysztof Zimowski, David Felberg, and Guillaume Tardif, violist Henk Guitart, Cantor Josh Perlman, and tenor Michiel Schrey. He formed Duo Giocoso (2008) with violinist Roland Arnassalon, Trio Vega (2013) with Arnassalon and cellist Noémie Raymond-Friset, and a piano duo Æterna Sirius (2017) with pianist Jessica Yam. Pettersson champions contemporary composers such as Alan Belkin, Alvin Curran, Drea Pressley Tischhauser, and Altin Volaj; he premiered Petroglyph for Piano (2011) by New Mexican composer Michael Mauldin, and recorded Gabriel Madden’s La Herse (2009), which featured a rare Sauter 1/16-microtonal piano.

A frequent masterclass teacher and lecturer throughout the USA and Canada, Pettersson was a jury member for the Canadian Music Competition (2013), Prix Opus (2016, 2017), and will judge the 2018 Jackie McGehee Young Artist Competition in New Mexico. Pettersson studied with Paul Stewart, Sergei Babayan, Larissa Dedova, Douglas Humpherys, and Maribeth Gunning, and has performed for André Watts, Jean-Bernard Pommier, Arnaldo Cohen, Dina Joffe, and the Guarneri String Quartet. He holds a doctorate from the Université de Montréal, where he is currently a teaching assistant.

Pettersson has three albums on the Axel Records label and is Artistic Director of Southwest Piano Festival, a summer performance series he founded in 2015.

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THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Tim Hedger and Chaz Salazar for organizing *An Evening of Music* and to Stephen Coker and Dr. Christopher Perez for hosting the concert on January 5th.

Pianist Sukhyun "Linus" Jung and First Evangelical Church for organizing and hosting our concert on January 7th.

Music Director Melissa Sailors and Camelback Christian Church for providing the instruments and hosting our concert on January 7th.

MyFirstPiano and Josh Wallace for providing the Yamaha DC6 for our concert and masterclasses at the Central United Methodist Church and for their continued support of Arizona Piano Institute.

The API Board of Directors for organizing our events at CUMC.



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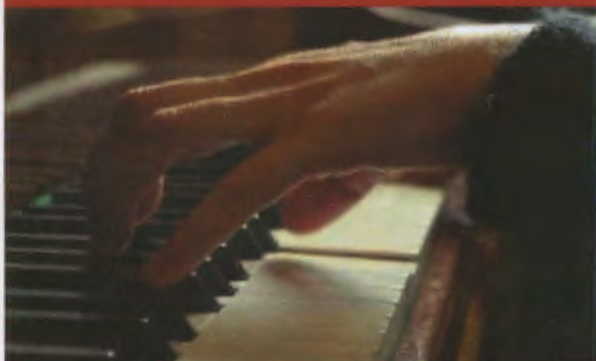




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