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CHOPIN
SOCIETY

2025-2026 **SEASON**

Music is the divine way to tell
beautiful, poetic things to the

HEART.

~ Pablo Casals ~

ERIC LU

Monday, February 16, 2026

3:00 PM Orpheum Theatre

MESSAGE FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

ERIC LU

Our season continues with this very special appearance by Eric Lu.

We are proud and pleased to present the only Canadian stop by this newly crowned gold medalist of the 19th International Chopin Competition in Warsaw.

Our season continues with concerts with some of today's most distinguished pianists - Ronald Brautigam, Dmitry Levkovich, Sofya Gulyak, and the long-awaited return of Daniil Trifonov. We end our season with the Vancouver and Canadian debut of Vincent Ong, a laureate of the 19th International Chopin Competition in Warsaw, a young artist who captured the hearts of many music lovers with his performance at the competition.

Our society is a member of the International Federation of Chopin Societies, based in Vienna. This connection puts us in touch with some fifty other Chopin Societies worldwide, creating exciting possibilities for inviting international musicians to Vancouver.

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Impromptu Opus 142 No. 1 in F minor
Impromptu Opus 142 No. 2 in A-flat major
Polonaise in F-sharp minor, Opus 44
Ballade No. 4 in F minor, Opus 52

SCHUBERT
SCHUBERT
CHOPIN
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Intermission

Polonaise in B-flat major, Opus 71, No. 2
Nocturne in C-sharp minor, Opus 27, No. 1
Sonata No. 3 in B minor, Opus 58

CHOPIN

- i. Allegro maestoso
- ii. Scherzo: Molto Vivace
- iii. Largo
- iv. Finale: Presto non tanto

Steinway piano courtesy of The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra.

We acknowledge the financial support of
The Province of British Columbia
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NOTES

Schubert, Impromptus, Op. 142, No. 1 in F minor and No. 2 in A-flat major

Schubert wrote a series of eight Impromptus in later 1827, while he was living in Vienna, not in great health but gaining recognition as a composer and making a living selling songs and piano pieces to publishers. It was a publisher who suggested the title Impromptu when accepting two of the eight pieces for publication; it must have been disappointing to the young man that he could not turn the others into cash. The four Impromptus of Op. 142 were not issued in print until 1839, eleven years after the composer had died. The first of these starts impressively in F minor and is followed by two themes in A-flat major, as in sonata form, one lyrical and the next a dialogue in which the left hand jumps to play both bass and soprano voices, while the right hand murmurs in the middle of the keyboard. There is no development section, but the recapitulation brings back all three of these ideas in the tonic key, ending as it began with a dramatic recitative-like flourish.

Impromptu No. 2 in A-flat major is like a minuet and trio. An intimate first section using chordal texture contrasts with a trio which has melody embedded in its flowing right-hand figuration. The first part returns unchanged, except for repetitions of the final cadence. The middle of both sections has surprising turns of harmony and greater intensity, Schubert's imagination flowering even in this small scale.

Chopin, Polonaise in F-sharp minor, Op. 44

Nohant, south of Paris in central France, was the summer home of Aurore Dudevant, Chopin's partner who was better known by her pen name George Sand. It was here in 1841 that Chopin completed this large-scale Polonaise, known by the nickname "Tragic." Chopin told his publisher that this was "a kind of fantasy in polonaise form;" it has the rhythms and heroic character of the traditional Polish dance, but the middle section does some genre bending as we hear a gentle mazurka in A major, like fond memories of home, starkly contrasting with the intensely militaristic opening. Inevitably, the sweeping scales and pounding octaves of the first section return for a devastating conclusion.

Chopin, Ballade No. 4 in F minor, Op. 52

The F minor Ballade is the longest, the most contrapuntal, and generally considered the finest of Chopin's four ballades. He wrote it in the summer of 1842, once again in the conducive atmosphere of Nohant, with his Pleyel piano in a quiet room, beautiful weather outside and an assortment of artistic guests to provide conversation when he needed a break. It was published with a dedication to Charlotte de Rothschild; both she and her mother took piano lessons with Chopin in Paris and this is sometimes described as a wedding present for young Charlotte.

An introduction leads to the evocative first theme which immediately is treated to a series of variations; we get a detailed description of the main character before moving to the simpler second subject in B-flat major. A development leads seamlessly to the return of the introduction and theme one, heard first in canon and again in a decorated version. Theme two is transformed with a whirling left-hand accompaniment. A few hushed chords create a pause before the final cataclysm of the coda.

Chopin, Polonaise in B-flat major, Op. 71, No. 2

This Polonaise was written in 1828 while Chopin was still a teenager, studying at the High School for Music in Warsaw (it was not published until 1855, after his death). Fresh and attractive with nationalistic rhythms, it shows the composer in an early stage of development, mastering the brilliant style popular in his day.

Chopin, Nocturne in C-sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 1

By 1836, Chopin was established in Paris, teaching and composing by day and socializing by night; this Nocturne was probably first performed at the salon of one his patrons. It opens with a brooding chromatic theme, followed by a middle section which erupts into emphatic fortissimo passages before arriving briefly in the happier realms of D-flat major. A dramatic cadenza ushers back the sorrowful first theme, and the coda is consoling, as the right hand plays quiet thirds over an anchoring bass pedal.

Chopin, Sonata in B minor, Op. 58

Allegro maestoso

Scherzo: Molto vivace

Largo

Finale: Presto non tanto

Although he was only thirty-five years old when he wrote this sonata in 1844, Chopin was suffering from tuberculosis and had just four more years to live. The sonata is a large, serious work; the music of Bach was a fascination of Chopin's at this time, and counterpoint is everywhere.

The first movement *Allegro maestoso* begins with a majestic B minor theme outlined in thick chords. A complex transition leads to theme two, a beautiful singing melody in D major. After development passages focussed on the opening material, the recapitulation is in B major (not the expected B minor) and truncated, avoiding the heroic first theme in favour of the lyrical second theme and ending optimistically.

The *Scherzo* is a whirling perpetual motion in E flat, rippling swiftly through all the registers of the piano. It has a quiet central trio with sonorous chords producing the effect of polyphony as they move, often over a bass pedal, and then the fleet Scherzo returns.

After a few dramatic chords, the third movement *Largo* is a long-breathed, ever-evolving, aria-like theme sung in B major. The middle section is deeply reflective, transported to E major with miraculous shifting harmonies. A variation of the aria tune returns to the home key and then the hushed coda combines the decorative melody of the A section with the slowly mutating harmonic colours of the middle section.

Several bars of introduction break the spell and the main theme of the rondo *Finale* is launched in the lower half of the keyboard, driving and relentless, full of passion. Major key episodes have cascades of dazzling scales in the top half of the keyboard. The rondo theme is transformed with new harmonies and figurations at every appearance, the last time leading to a triumphant conclusion with a brilliant coda.

Ruth Enns,

Vancouver Academy of Music

January 2026

ERIC LU

Piano



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BIOGRAPHY

Eric Lu is the First Prize Winner of the 19th International Chopin Piano Competition 2025 in Warsaw. Before that he had won First Prize at the Leeds International Piano Competition in 2018 at the age of 20. Eric's always thoughtful, poetically imbued and powerful interpretations have already made him one of the most distinctive artists on the international music scene.

Recent and forthcoming orchestral collaborations include the London Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Boston Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, NHK Symphony, Oslo Philharmonic, Finnish Radio Symphony, Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Swedish Chamber Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony, Iceland Symphony, Tokyo Symphony, Singapore Symphony, Taipei Symphony, Shanghai Symphony at the BBC Proms, and Yomiuri Nippon Symphony amongst others. Conductors he collaborates with include Riccardo Muti, Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, Ryan Bancroft, Edward Gardner, Marin Alsop, Sir Mark Elder, Thomas Dausgaard, Tabita Berglund, Tomas Netopil, Duncan Ward, Vasily Petrenko, Ruth Reinhardt, Kahchun Wong, Earl Lee, Nuno Coehlo, Martin Fröst, Joann Falletta, Daniél Bjarason, and Eliahu Inbal.

Active as a recitalist, he is has performed at Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Queen Elizabeth Hall London, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Wigmore Hall, Cologne Philharmonie, San Francisco Davies Hall, Cal Performances, Aspen Music Festival, BOZAR Brussels, Flagey, Fondation Louis Vuitton Paris, 92Y New York, Seoul Arts Center, Shanghai Symphony Hall, Victoria Hall Singapore, Chopin and his Europe Festival, Warsaw Philharmonic Hall and Sala São Paulo.

Eric is an exclusive Warner Classics artist. His 4th album featuring the 2 opuses of Schubert's Impromptus will be released in January 2026. His previous albums on Warner Classics were all met with worldwide critical acclaim. His 2022 Schubert album won BBC Music Magazine's Instrumental Choice while his previous Brahms-Chopin-Schumann album was hailed "truly magical" by International Piano.

Born in Massachusetts in 1997, Eric Lu first came to international attention as a Laureate of the 2015 Chopin International Competition in Warsaw, aged just 17. He was also awarded the International German Piano Award in 2017, and Avery Fisher Career Grant in 2021. Eric was a BBC New Generation Artist from 2019 to 2022. He is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, studying with Robert McDonald and Jonathan Biss. He also studied with Dang Thai Son and has been mentored by Mitsuko Uchida and Imogen Cooper. He is now based in Berlin and Boston.



Our Campaign to Acquire a Steinway Model D Piano

Ever since our first concert in 1998, The Vancouver Chopin Society has presented to Vancouver audiences some of the greatest pianistic talents of our time. But any pianist, no matter how gifted, requires an instrument that would allow the artist to realize his or her artistic vision. After more than 25 years of presenting great performances of timeless music, we feel it is time for our society to acquire our own Steinway & Sons piano, so that the piano can be kept in its "home" at the Vancouver Playhouse, allowing us to have complete responsibility for the care and maintenance of the instrument.

By launching this bold new endeavour, we are making a significant investment not only on the future of our society, but on the future of great musical performances in our community and city.

We have the option of purchasing a Steinway piano manufactured in New York, which would cost approximately Canadian \$350,000, or a piano manufactured in Hamburg, Germany, which would translate to about \$400,000.

To help us reach our goal, you can give a donation toward our "88 Keys Campaign", to help us purchase a single key (\$3,888), two keys (\$7,776), or more!

You can select your keys at: <https://chopinsociety.steinwayfund.com> or use the QR code below to access our campaign page and make a pledge. Please remember that no payment is required at this point. We will contact you regarding the next steps once a pledge is made.



You can also give a donation by e-transfer to info@chopinsociety.org, or by cheque to #400 - 601 West Broadway Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., V5Z 4C2.

Please join us in making a commitment to the future of classical music in Vancouver.

"I believe that it is now time for the Society to have its own instrument in order to best showcase the talents of its wonderful pianists."

Charles Richard-Hamelin, Artistic Director

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