



PRINCETON
UNIVERSITY
CONCERTS

Lisa Batiashvili Violin

Giorgi Gigashvili Piano



25/26 SEASON



Dear Friends,

As we come to the close of this remarkable season, I am holding onto a deep sense of gratitude—and more than that, awe at all we've shared together this year.

There were moments this season that felt almost suspended in time. The radiant, soaring voice of tenor Benjamin Bernheim filling the hall with such clarity and emotion. The searching, deeply human artistry of violist Tabea Zimmermann, reminding us how profoundly music can speak without words. And one evening in particular that lingers with me still: sitting in the dark, listening to the glorious voice of mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt Lieberson, in a program shaped with care and insight by director Peter Sellars—an experience of music and healing that felt both intimate and expansive, personal and communal all at once.

There were, of course, so many other moments—too many to name—that brought joy, reflection, exhilaration, and connection. What stays with me most is not just the brilliance on stage, but the feeling in the room: of a community coming together to listen, to feel, and to be moved.

And none of this happens without you.

I want to express my deepest thanks to everyone who supported the series this year. Your generosity sustains this work in the most tangible way, making it possible for us to bring extraordinary artists to our stage and to create these shared experiences that matter so deeply.

As I look ahead to a few quieter months, there is that familiar sense of anticipation—knowing that we must wait, but also knowing that what awaits us will be worth it. Next season promises to be every bit as exceptional, and subscriptions are now on sale. I hope you'll join us again. Until then, I wish you a summer filled with rest, beauty, and, of course, music.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marna Seltzer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "M".

Marna Seltzer
Director of Princeton University Concerts

Thursday, April 30, 2026 at 7:30PM • Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall

LISA BATIASHVILI Violin
GIORGI GIGASHVILI Piano

**LUDWIG
VAN
BEETHOVEN**
(1770–1827)

Violin Sonata No. 3 in E-flat Major, Op. 12, No. 3
Allegro con spirito
Adagio con molt' espressione
Rondo: Allegro molto

**SERGEI
PROKOFIEV**
(1891–1953)

Violin Sonata No. 1 in F Minor, Op. 80
Andante assai
Allegro brusco
Andante
Allegrissimo

INTERMISSION

**JOSEF
BARDANASHVILI**
(b. 1948)

To Giya Kancheli (P.S.) for Violin and Piano

**CÉSAR
FRANCK**
(1822–1890)

Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano
Allegretto ben moderato
Allegro
Recitativo–Fantasia (Ben moderato)
Allegretto poco mosso

*Photographs and audio/video recording are prohibited during the performance. Out of respect for the artists and enjoyment of your fellow concertgoers, **please turn off cell phones and other electronic devices** before the concert. Scan this QR code with your smartphone to view instructions for silencing your phone.*





About the Program

By Lucy Caplan © 2026 • Program Annotator

*Lucy Caplan is Assistant Professor of Music at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Her first book is *Dreaming in Ensemble: How Black Artists Transformed American Opera* (Harvard University Press, 2025).*

Each work on this evening's program is dedicated to a fellow musician: Beethoven's sonata to the composer Antonio Salieri, Prokofiev's to violinist David Oistrakh, Bardanashvili's to composer Giya Kancheli, and Franck's to violinist Eugène Ysaÿe. These commemorations speak to the fact that sonatas are musicians' music. Straddling the line between virtuosic solo performance and the intimacy of a small ensemble, they rest on a close sense of interplay between two people—one that requires consummate skill, sensitivity, and the ability to really listen. Perhaps these works' dedications honor that spirit of dialogue, with each composer naming an admired musical interlocutor.

“ Each work on this evening's program is dedicated to a fellow musician... These commemorations speak to the fact that sonatas are musicians' music.”

Yet sonatas are, of course, products of the wider world. Prokofiev's sonata is a case in point: composed between 1938 and 1946, it is suffused with despair at the horrors of war and state terror that transpired during those fateful years. This coexistence of political hideousness and artistic beauty can be hard to fathom. It is a question that Lisa Batiashvili has taken up in her own career, by commissioning Igor Loboda's *Requiem for Ukraine* and organizing material support for Ukrainians. These activities may seem far removed from the performance of a sonata; yet, as the musicologist Christopher Small wrote, part of music's power is its ability to model ideal social relationships. From this point, sonatas offer a tantalizing glimpse of a world in which beauty, dialogue, and care for one another are fundamental values—a world which may yet come into being.

Ludwig van Beethoven, Sonata for Piano and Violin in E-flat Major, Op. 12, No. 3 (1798)

Fans of the classic film *Amadeus* may be surprised to learn that the vengeful Salieri was, in real life, well-respected among his fellow composers. Indeed, Beethoven elected to dedicate his three Op. 12 violin sonatas to Salieri, with whom he had studied earlier in his career. Given that their lessons focused primarily on the craft of vocal music, the choice to honor his teacher with these works is rather unexpected—perhaps a nod to the sonatas’ operatic grandeur, made possible by both their rhetorically dramatic style and the virtuosic complexity of the instrumental writing for both performers.

The sonata’s E-flat major key gives it an early place among Beethoven’s “heroic” works, anticipating later hallmarks like the Symphony No. 3, “Eroica,” and the Piano Concerto No. 5, the “Emperor.” In the first movement, grand gestures—downward-sweeping scales and assertive repeated chords—melt seamlessly into a gentle second theme. Although the second movement is slower, it is not especially relaxed. Its melodies are majestic, and it maintains the rhetorical precision and elaborate figuration of the first movement. The third movement is a delightful rondo, with a warm, kinetic theme and several brilliant contrasting episodes. The piano and violin trade musical roles elegantly and often, rather like dance partners pulling off an elaborately choreographed routine.

Sergei Prokofiev, Violin Sonata No. 1 in F Minor, Op. 80 (1946)

Prokofiev wrote this sonata in fits and starts. He began the work in 1938, then took a hiatus. After returning to it in 1943, he paused his efforts a second time and did not complete it until 1946. It is not hard to see why he confided in a friend that this was a “difficult” effort. Prokofiev had moved to the Soviet Union in 1936 after more than a decade spent living in Germany and France. Soon after his return, he bore witness to Stalin’s Great Terror. Throughout the year of 1937, numerous of his colleagues and patrons were abducted and killed by the secret police. Prokofiev dutifully composed bright, vivid works that adhered to Soviet cultural policy’s emphasis on patriotic and folk-inspired music. But he found other outlets for expressing his despair through music—not least, this sonata.

The eventual completion of the sonata, which came after the traumas of Soviet repression were compounded and amplified by World War II, may have come at the behest of violinist David Oistrakh, a longtime collaborator to whom Prokofiev ultimately dedicated the work. The first movement is anchored by a mournful melody in the piano’s

bass register, with an out-of-time quality enhanced by a time signature that alternates between 3/4 and 4/4. The second, marked “allegro brusco,” is angrier, with heavy repeated down-bows in the violin’s opening statement and a second theme whose lyricism carries a sardonic tinge. The third movement gestures wistfully toward Prokofiev’s time in Europe: it begins with ornamented lines which call to mind Baroque counterpoint, and the muted violin, doubled by the piano, recalls the textures of French impressionism. The final movement’s spirited sound is hard to pin down—it dances, then plays, then rages. Toward the end, themes from the rest of the piece resurface. Oistrakh would later note that Prokofiev described the hurried up-and-down scales prominent in the sonata’s first and last movements as sounding like “wind in a graveyard.” It is an apt description of the work’s pervasive mood, as well as the way it might have served as a subtle memorial to the composer’s disappeared colleagues.

Josef Bardanashvili, *To Giya Kancheli (P.S.)* (2020)

Born in 1948 in Batumi, Georgia, Josef Bardanashvili studied at the Music Academy in Tbilisi under Aleksandr Shaverzashvili, where he graduated with a Doctor’s Degree in composition in 1976. Bardanashvili served as Director of the Music College in Batumi (1986–1991), Culture Vice-Minister in Adjara (1993–1994), and in this capacity organized numerous international music festivals. He settled in Israel in 1995. Bardanashvili has composed more than 100 works, five opera’s, five ballets, four symphonies, concertos for piano, violin, cello, mandolin, flute, and guitar; string quartets, quintets, and piano trios; piano sonatas; choir music; and songs. He has written music for 55 films and 65 theater productions. His numerous compositions have been successfully performed all over the world—in Israel, Georgia, the United States, Germany, Russia, France, Spain, Italy, Finland, Canada, Japan, Armenia, and the United Kingdom.

To Giya Kancheli (P.S.) is scored for violin and piano. The composer writes:

In our whole lifetime, we meet a large number of people—lots of human beings and faces will pass away in the process of our lives. But our memory usually preserves the faces of loved and special ones among them. The mind separately picks out the precious faces that stay with us forever, deeply becoming part of us, and the time factor doesn’t affect them. This, my new piece, is dedicated to such a look and was written to the memory of my close friend and famous composer Giya Kancheli. The musical language of the work is very simple, but full of special inner light. Episodes are built according to the contrasting principle and create the illusion of eternal reincarnation in time.

(Biography and notes provided by the composer.)

César Franck, Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano (1886)

Guests at the 1886 wedding of the esteemed Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe and the singer Louise Bourdeau were treated to a special event: a hastily arranged performance by the groom and pianist Léontine Bordes-Pène of Franck's newly composed sonata, which was a gift composed for the occasion. Delighted to have been honored with what he rightfully recognized as an instant classic, Ysaÿe continued to perform the sonata over the course of his career. It has become a staple of the repertoire.

The piece displays some of Franck's signature qualities as a composer. The first movement foregrounds what one scholar has called his "iambic rhythm," which features gently accented second beats and corresponding harmonic shifts. Rather than trading musical ideas back and forth, the violin and piano generally have distinct melodic material, allowing for the creation of two fully individualized voices. In Franck's characteristically cyclical style, these themes reappear throughout the sonata, taking on different guises as the piece progresses. Whereas the first movement is contemplative and sunny, the second is tempestuous, with a driving violin line replete with virtuosic flourishes. Franck then breaks with formal convention by structuring the third movement as a recitative-fantasia. Quasi-improvisatory solo passages in the violin and moody chromaticism in the piano are followed by extended, ethereal duets. The final movement begins with an elegant canon between the two voices, then moves through a harmonically adventurous series of keys before coming to a joyous close.

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November 12
2026

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TONY SIQI YUN,* Piano

Thursday, January 28, 2027 | 7:30PM

STEPHEN HOUGH, Piano

Tuesday, May 11, 2027 | 7:30PM

MITSUKO UCHIDA, Piano



**TONY
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*Princeton University Concerts debut

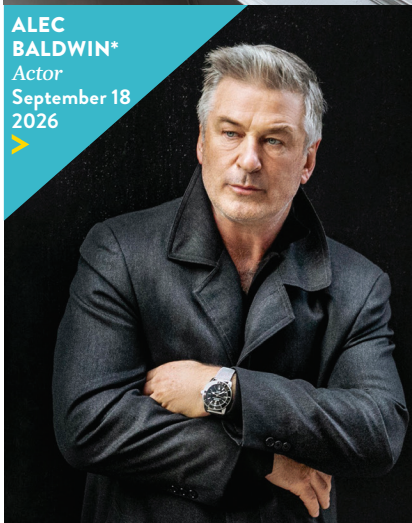
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Collective Listening Project

Get a preview of the music and artists coming next season with our 26/27 Season Highlights Playlist, part of the Collective Listening Project. This curated selection offers a glimpse into what's ahead, alongside many other playlists created by members of the Princeton University Concerts community— all available to stream for free.

puc.princeton.edu/collective-listening-project



PRINCETON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS!

Join the last Internoshin' of the season! Meet your fellow student attendees at intermission in the Richardson Lounge (basement level) over **free snacks**. Hosted by the Student Ambassadors of PUC.



LISA BATIASHVILI

Violinist Lisa Batiashvili, a Georgian-born German violinist, has built enduring relationships with many of the world's leading orchestras, conductors, and musicians. Batiashvili's 2025-26 season began with a tour alongside the Munich Philharmonic under Lahav Shani, followed by continued collaborations with Yannick Nézet-Séguin in Montreal and Philadelphia. In early 2026, she toured with the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Klaus Mäkelä. Additional engagements include projects with the Filarmonica della Scala, Kammerakademie Potsdam, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and her passion project, *City Lights*, with the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra.

In 2021, she founded the Lisa Batiashvili Foundation, fulfilling a lifelong commitment to supporting exceptionally talented young Georgian musicians and helping them thrive in international musical careers. Advocacy and cultural responsibility are central to her artistic life.

An active chamber musician, she tours extensively with pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet and cellist Gautier Capuçon. She also performs with Georgian composer/pianist Giorgi Gigashvili, supported by her foundation. Recording exclusively for Deutsche Grammophon,

her recent releases include *Secret Love Letters* (2022) with Yannick Nézet-Séguin and The Philadelphia Orchestra and earlier acclaimed albums such as *City Lights* and *Visions of Prokofiev*. Her discography has earned major awards including an Opus Klassik Award and international critical acclaim. Lisa Batiashvili lives in Berlin and performs on a 1739 Joseph Guarneri “del Gesù,” generously loaned by a private collector.

This is Lisa Batiashvili’s third appearance at Princeton University Concerts. Her debut was with pianist Paul Lewis in 2015, and she participated in PUC’s Music & Healing series last night. For her official biography, please visit lisabatiashvili.com.

GIORGI GIGASHVILI

Born in Tbilisi, Georgia, in 2000, Giorgi studied the piano without ever considering pursuing a professional career as a pianist. Passionate about the folksongs of his country, he likes to arrange and sing this music—he even participated in the Georgian version of *The Voice*, taking home the top prize at the tender age of thirteen.

In April 2019 he won 1st Prize at the Vigo International Piano Competition, with Martha Argerich as president of the jury. In March 2023, Giorgi won the 2nd Prize at the Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition and was also awarded the Junior Jury Prize. His debut album *Meeting my Shadow* was released in April 2023 with Alpha Classics.

As part of his nomination as an ECHO Rising Star 2025/26, he will perform in European venues, including Barbican Centre London, Bozar Brussels, Gulbenkian Foundation Lisbon, Philharmonie de Paris, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Het Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Kölner Philharmonie, Konzerthaus Dortmund, Palau de la Musica Barcelona, Müpa Budapest, Philharmonie Luxemburg, and Wiener Konzerthaus. A special highlight of his season is the current recital tour with Lisa Batiashvili in Europe and North America.

Giorgi studied with Kirill Gerstein at the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler in Berlin and with Nelson Goerner in Geneva. He is supported by the Lisa Batiashvili Foundation, by Bayer Kultur’s stARTacademy and the Orpheum Foundation for the advancement of young soloists. Giorgi was selected a BBC New Generation Artist 2023-2025. Since 2025, he has been a Steinway Artist.

This concert marks Giorgi Gigashvili’s Princeton University Concerts debut. For his official biography, please visit giorgigigashvili.com.

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Your help is critical to our future. Ticket sales cover less than half the cost of presenting the finest world-class music. The remaining support comes from a visionary endowment established by the Ladies' Musical Committee in 1929; the Philena Fobes Fine Memorial Fund and the Jesse Peabody Frothingham Fund; and, most importantly, from donors like you. We are deeply grateful to the individuals whose support at every level ensures that live musical performance continues to enrich Princeton, the community, and the region.

If you wish to make a donation to Princeton University Concerts or inquire about planned giving or sponsorship opportunities, please call Marna Seltzer at 609-258-2800 or visit puc.princeton.edu.

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The list below acknowledges gifts of \$150 or more, received between April 1, 2025 and April 1, 2026. If you see an error or would like to make a change in your listing, please contact the Concert Office at 609-258-2800.

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—Pianist Stephen Hough,
who appeared with the Takács Quartet (2024/25 Season)

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The first concert in what is known today as Princeton University Concerts was presented on October 29, 1894, thus establishing one of the oldest continuous series of musical events in the country. From 1894 to 1914, the “Ladies Musical Committee” presented concerts by the Kneisel Quartet. After 1914, the programs diversified. In 1929, the Ladies Committee became the Princeton University Concerts Committee—a town and gown group of interested and knowledgeable music lovers—which has guided the University Concerts to date

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Presenting the world’s leading classical musicians at Princeton University since 1894, Princeton University Concerts aims to enrich the lives of the widest possible audience. We are grateful to Lisa Margulis, Interim Chair and Professor of Music, and the Department of Music for its partnership in and support of this vision. For more information about the Department and its vibrant student- and faculty-led programming, please visit music.princeton.edu.



Spring 26

At the Princeton Public Library

Thursday, January 22 | 12PM | Book Group

**“HARD BY A GREAT FOREST”
BY LEO VARDIASHVILI**

Concert Classics Series

Thursday, February 5 | 7:30PM

**BENJAMIN BERNHEIM Tenor*
CARRIE-ANN MATHESON Piano***

Concert Classics Series

Thursday, February 12 | 7:30PM

MARMEN STRING QUARTET*

Special Event

Sunday, February 22 | 3PM

**JOYCE DIDONATO Mezzo-soprano
TIME FOR THREE**

All in the Family

Saturday, March 14 | 1PM & 3PM

**LITTLE LISTENERS Ages 3-6
“Time for Music”**

At the Princeton Garden Theatre

Wednesday, March 18 | 7PM | Movie Screening

“PORCELAIN WAR”

Concert Classics Series

Thursday, March 19 | 7:30PM

**TABEA ZIMMERMANN Viola
JAVIER PERIANES Piano***

Richardson Chamber Players / Special Event

Thursday, March 26 | 7:30PM

**PATRICIA KOPATCHINSKAJA Violin
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY**

CHAPEL CHOIR

RICHARDSON CHAMBER PLAYERS

**“Dies Irae,” a staged reflection on the
end of the world**

Concert Classics Series

Wednesday, April 8 | 7:30PM

ÉBÈNE STRING QUARTET

Concert Classics Series

Thursday, April 23 | 7:30PM

**AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
RICHARD TOGNETTI Director**

Music & Healing

Wednesday, April 29 | 7:30PM

**LISA BATIASHVILI Violinist
“Sounding Defiance: Georgia & Ukraine”**

Concert Classics Series

Thursday, April 30 | 7:30PM

**LISA BATIASHVILI Violin
GIORGI GIGASHVILI Piano***

CHECK OUT THE FULL

25/26

LINEUP HERE:



*Princeton University Concerts Debut

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