

A Musical Evening - “The French Connection”

at the Berkeley Piano Club
2724 Haste St, Berkeley

Performed by

Bob Epstein and Shanti Moorjani

Thursday, October 23, 2025 at 7:30 PM
(Doors open at 7:00 PM)

Performing the four-hand and solo piano works of:

Franz Schubert/Greg Anderson
“Erlkönig”

Cécile Chaminade
“Six Pièces Romantiques Op. 55”
Primavera (Springtime), La chaise à porteurs (The sedan chair), Idylle arabe (Arabian Romance), Sérénade d’automne (Autumn serenade), Rigaudon

Automne, Opus 35, No 2 (Shanti Solo)

Chabrier
“Scherzo-Valse” (Shanti Solo)

Valery Gavrilin - “Sketches”
“Musketeers”

Schubert/Anderson
“Ave Maria”

Franz Liszt
“Liebestraum” #2 (Bob Solo)

Frederic Chopin
Prelude C# minor Opus 45 (Bob Solo)

Gabriel Fauré
Dolly Suite
Berceuse (Lullaby), Messieu Aoul (Mister Aoul), Jardin de Dolly (Dolly’s Garden), Ketty-Valse (Ketty’s Waltz), Tendresse (Tenderness), Pas Espagnol (Spanish Dance)

About Today's Program - The French Connection

Welcome to Shanti and Bob's 15th recital since their first performance in March of 2015. This program is titled: "The French Connection". Last February Bob discovered the music of Cécile Chaminade - a famous French composer that neither Bob nor Shanti knew. They started playing her solo and 4-hand music and decided to build a program around her music combining it with other French composers including Chabrier, Fauré and Chopin who lived in France for most of his adult life.

This program also features the music of Schubert in 4-hand arrangements composed by Greg Anderson from the Anderson-Roe duet - and we continue to explore the music of Russian composer Gavrilin.

About Four-Hand Music

Four-hand music is rarely performed on the concert stage. Composers going back to Mozart created four-hand music to play in chamber settings or with their friends (or sister in Mozart's case). It was also common to present orchestral music for piano in days before recording was common. Instead, we have a "20-finger" orchestra that can make musical magic and expand the horizons of the piano.

Part of the challenge of 4-hand performance is the choreography required to keep the arms and fingers moving in a way that allows the notes to be played. The Chaminade, Fauré and Gavrilin music were originally composed for 4-hand and are generally well-behaved - meaning each player has half the keyboard and cooperate in the middle of the keyboard. By contrast, Anderson goes out of his way to challenge the players to venture into each other's territory - as you will see!

In 4-hand music every phrase has one player in charge and the other following. On the music scores in front of us, we have printed many reminders of what the other player is going to do! We communicate through watching each other's finger movements, arm movements, head nodding and sometimes a gentle or not so gentle nudge. One unexpected arm movement and you can knock your partner's hand off the keys. Each page turn requires an analysis of who has time to make the turn.

Shanti & Bob

Program Notes

Franz Schubert/Greg Anderson - "Erlkönig" (1821)

"Erlkönig", Op. 1, D 328, is a Lied composed by Franz Schubert in 1815, which sets to music, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's poem of the same name. Among Schubert's most famous works, the piece has been arranged by many famous composers (estimated to have over 100 arrangements). Our 4-hand version was arranged by Greg Anderson. Shanti and Bob have played many of Anderson's arrangements. They always have an element of choreographic challenges that add to the fun.

The "Erlkönig" melodies alternate through the role of four characters — the narrator, a father, his small son, and the titular "Erlking", a supernatural creature who pursues the boy. The constant triplet notes that begin and continue through the whole piece represents the galloping horse that the father is riding while holding his son.

After a long introduction you will hear the narrator:
*Who rides so late through night and wind?
It is a father with his child.
He has the boy well in his arm
He holds him safely, he keeps him warm.*

That is followed by the father & son:
*"My son, why do you hide your face in fear?"
"Father, do you not see the Erlking?
The Erlking with crown and tail?"
"My son, it is a streak of fog."*

The Erlking then starts his seduction as the music moves to B-flat major:
*"You dear child, come, go with me!
Very lovely games I'll play with you;
Some colorful flowers are on the beach,
My mother has some golden robes."*

The son and father react:
*"My father, my father, and do you not hear
What Erlking quietly promises me?"
"Be calm, stay calm, my child;
The wind is rustling through dry leaves."*

The Erlking continues his seduction:
"Do you, fine boy, want to go with me?"

*My daughters shall wait on you finely;
My daughters lead the nightly dance,
And rock and dance and sing you to sleep,
They rock and dance and sing you to sleep."*

The child continues to plead with his father:
*"My father, my father, and don't you see
there Erlking's daughters in the gloomy
place?"
"My son, my son, I see it clearly:
There shimmer the old willows so grey."*

The Erlking continues followed by the child's plea
*"I love you, your beautiful form excites me;
And if you're not willing, then I will use
force."
"My father, my father, he's touching me
now!
Erlking has done me harm!"*

The narrator continues:
*It horrifies the father, he swiftly rides on,
He holds the groaning child in his arms,
Reaches the farm with great difficulty;
In his arms, the child was dead.*

Cécile Chaminade - "Six Pièces Romantiques Op. 55" (1890)

The poetic qualities of this set, its melodic charm and the variety and refinement of its writing call to mind Chabrier's Pièces Pittoresques (1880-81) which Shanti will play later in the program. Combining the rhythm of the barcarolle with the spirit of the waltz, (1) Primavera (Springtime), together with its elegant lines and subtle harmony, shows a delightful pastoral freshness. (2) La chaise à porteurs (The sedan

chair), a delicate march moves along jauntily over an imperturbable rhythm in the bass. (3) Idylle arabe (Arabian Romance), discreet modal touches and the arpeggiated chords of some plucked string instrument are the only elements that evoke a distant land, since Arabia here is dancing the waltz! There is nothing melancholy about autumn as represented in (4), Sérénade d'automne, in which a gently rocking melody alternates with more fanciful episodes, evoking the sound of a guitar or a mandolin. The last piece, Rigaudon (which has more the features of a gavotte) ends the set with popular strains and ornamentation borrowed from the Baroque harpsichord. There are 6 pieces in the set but Shanti & Bob are skipping number 5.

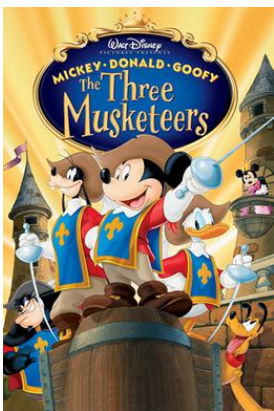
Cécile Chaminade - Automne, Opus 35, No 2 (1886) (Shanti Solo)

Automne is one of Chaminade's most popular works for solo piano. Presented in the traditional Romantic stylings similar to Franz Liszt and Frédéric Chopin, Chaminade's Automne is a delicate study for piano. The cantabile theme is presented at the beginning of Automne, and is then intricately developed and explored. Chaminade's full textures across the piano create ripples of harmony that aid in the development of the songful theme. Throughout the piece the atmosphere is peaceful, except for the central section, where Chaminade goes full-on Liszt across the instrument.

Alexis-Emmanuel Chabrier - "Scherzo-Valse" (1880) (Shanti Solo)

In 1880, while on a convalescent holiday at the coastal resort of Saint-Pair, Chabrier composed what were to be called Pièces pittoresques. The Scherzo-Valse is the last of the 10 pieces in the set. Poulenc put the cycle Pièces pittoresques on a par with Debussy's Preludes in its importance for French music.

Valery Gavrilin - "Sketches - Musketeers" (1970s)



Bob first heard about "Sketches" by Russian composer Gavrilin from Anna Smigelskaya, a pianist whom Amy and Bob sponsored during the Merola Opera 2021 summer program. She is from Saint Petersburg and knows her modern Russian composers. The rest of us have probably never heard of Gavrilin. "Sketches" is a collection of 18 short pieces - each one evoking a specific image. "Musketeers" brings to our mind the Disney animation of Mickey, Donald and Goofy becoming part of the regiment. The music is fun and entertaining.

Franz Schubert/Greg Anderson - "Ave Maria" (1825)

Ave Maria is one of the most cherished works of Schubert. The music is based on a poem by Sir Walter Scott and Schubert did not have a liturgical purpose in mind. Nevertheless it found tremendous acceptance and popularity among Roman Catholics, particularly in Latin. The woman 'Ellen' mentioned in the German title was Ellen Douglas, who was the primary character and heroine of Scott's poem. Schubert encountered Das Fräulein vom See, a German iteration of Scott's poem and immediately recognized its viability as a musical composition. The composition was crafted with one singer and one pianist in mind. This was subsequently rearranged into different piano versions by Liszt and more recently by Anderson.

Franz Liszt - "Liebestraum" #2 (1850) (Bob Solo)

"Liebestraum" is a set of three solo piano nocturnes first written for voice with piano accompaniment in 1847. It was re-released as a piano solo by Liszt in 1850. The title roughly translates as "love dream". Bob played Liebestraum #3 and #1 at the previous musical evenings. Liszt is known for big virtuosic piano pieces so discovering this more gentle side of the composer, including the "Consolation Suite" has been a musical journey for Bob. With tonight's performance, Bob completes his Liszt journey!

Frederic Chopin - Prelude C# minor Opus 45 (1841) (Bob solo)

When Chopin sent the manuscript of Opus 45 to his publisher for copying, Chopin could not hide his satisfaction, expressed in the words: "well modulated!". The Prelude does not have a structured form. It gives the impression of being a notated improvisation. The four opening bars set the mood. There follows a dreamy spinning-out of two slowly formed themes: the principal theme, in which the boundary between melody and accompaniment melts away in the overall sound, and a second theme. Bob selected this piece after hearing Diane play it last December because it is so unique.

Gabriel Fauré - Dolly Suite (1896)

Fauré wrote or revised the Dolly Suite between 1893 and 1896, for Hélène Bardac (1892–1985), known to her family as Dolly. She was the young daughter of the singer Emma Bardac, with whom Fauré had a long-running affair. He was in the practice of sending pieces of music, in manuscript, to mark Dolly's birthdays and other family occasions. The suite is in 6 movements:

Berceuse (Allegretto moderato). The Berceuse, marking Dolly's first birthday, was a very early piece, composed in 1864 for Suzanne Garnier, the daughter of a family friend. In 1893 Fauré made some small amendments and changed its title to "Berceuse" – that is, lullaby.

Messieu Aoul (Allegro vivo). "Messieu Aoul" was written for Dolly's second birthday in June 1894. The title refers to Dolly's attempts to pronounce the name of her elder brother Raoul, who later became one of Fauré's favorite pupils. The young Dolly called her brother Messieu Aoul, which Fauré took as the original title for the piece.

Jardin de Dolly (Andantino). "*Jardin de Dolly*", was composed as a present for New Year's Day 1895. It contains a quotation from Fauré's First Violin Sonata, composed 20 years earlier. It is easy for us to image walking through a beautiful garden at a leisurely pace.

Ketty-Valse (Tempo di Valse). The Bardacs' pet dog was called Ketty and this piece is a kind of whirling portrait of the animal.

Tendresse (Andante). "Tendresse" was originally dedicated to Adela Maddison, wife of a music publisher. Like "*Jardin de Dolly*", this piece is lyrical, but is in a more modern style, making use of chromaticism that Fauré used again later in his Nocturnes.

Pas Espagnol (Allegro). The suite ends with a Spanish dance, a lively and picturesque piece of scene-painting, in the style of España by Fauré's friend Emmanuel Chabrier.

Thanks

Since Shanti and Bob's first meeting in March 2011, they have been music partners encouraging each other to grow their musical skills. Our families have been very supportive and we want to thank our spouses Lachu & Amy for their encouragement. We practice a lot so they heard these pieces many, many times but never complain.

Early on, we decided to take lessons and were lucky to find our music teacher, Diane Hidy. We have been studying with her since July 2013 - even during the pandemic we all learned how to take and teach lessons remotely. Fortunately, that period is now part of history. She works with us almost every week and has guided our efforts. We are very grateful. Thank you, Diane.

During the pandemic, [Joyce Yang](#), one of our favorite pianists, made herself available for piano sessions over zoom. Since September 2020, we have had monthly sessions with Joyce. She has provided us with ideas from her extensive experience as a performer. It has been a joy for us and a unique experience.

Shanti Moorjani and Bob Epstein

About Us

Shanti Moorjani received her Bachelor's degree in music education from Crane School of Music at Potsdam University in upstate New York, working under Arthur Frackenpohl, Michael Tilson Thomas, and Howard Hansen. Shanti was inspired by her two piano professors, Helga Hulse in high school and James Ball, head of the piano department at the Crane School of Music. She went on to receive her Master of Performance in Organ at San Francisco State University in California. She holds a graduate certificate in Kodaly music from Holy Names University and an Orff music credential. She has taught general music in the schools, directed choirs and programs and was formerly music director for the Arlington Community Church. She continues her 43-year career of private piano instruction. Her interests in performing and four-hand piano have deepened since playing with Bob and training with Diane.

Bob Epstein started piano at 7, trumpet at 10 and played through college. He also arranged music for the Cal Band. He was briefly a music major at Cal but ended up with a PhD in Engineering. After a period of over 20 years when he rarely played, his son Harris bought him some new music; his son Colin later bought him a recording session as a birthday present; he met Shanti and then Diane told him he could be good. Now he is hooked.

About the Composers



Greg Anderson (1981 -) was born in St. Paul, Minnesota and began his piano studies at age seven. Anderson studied with Julian Martin at The Juilliard School where he received his Bachelor and Master of Music degrees in Piano Performance in 2004 and 2006. Anderson's oeuvre consists of arrangements, fantasies, and original compositions. His compositions exhibit many of the traits Franz Liszt developed in his famous paraphrases of music in the nineteenth century. His arrangements are virtuosic and often playful transformations of familiar material into novel forms and styles. In addition to playing solo performances, Anderson performs with his piano duo partner, fellow Steinway Artist, Elizabeth Joy Roe.



Alexis-Emmanuel Chabrier (1841 - 1894) was a French Romantic composer and pianist. Polish composer Tarnovsky advised Chabrier's parents that their son was talented enough to pursue a musical career, but Jean Chabrier was determined that his son should follow him into the legal profession. Chabrier did that until age 39 - when he turned to composing full-time. His lack of academic training left him free to create his own musical language. Unaffected by established rules he was regarded by many later composers as an important innovator and a catalyst who paved the way for French modernism. He was admired by, and influenced, composers as diverse as Chaminade, Debussy, Ravel, Richard Strauss, Satie and Stravinsky. In his introduction to a 1995 edition of the piano works, Howat writes that it was Chabrier, more than any other composer, who restored to French music "the essential French traits of clarity, emotional vitality, wit and tenderness" when other French composers were under the influence of Wagner or of dry academicism.



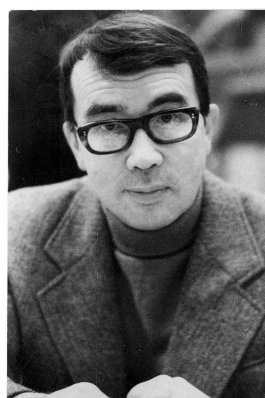
Cécile Chaminade (1857 - 1944) was a French composer and pianist. In 1913, she was awarded the Légion d'Honneur, a first for a female composer. At a young age she started playing the piano, with her mother being her first teacher. She then studied with Félix Le Couppey. As well as learning the piano, Chaminade also took an interest in learning the violin. She studied with Marie Gabriel Savard and Martin Pierre Marsick. Chaminade flourished in music composition so much so she showed some of her sacred music to Georges Bizet. He was very impressed by her talent and worked closely with the young composer. When she was 18 she gave her first concert.



Frédéric Chopin (1810 - 1849) was born in Poland and became a leading virtuoso pianist of the Romantic era. Chopin was invited at an early age to play at private soirées, and at eight he made his first public appearance at a charity concert. Three years later he performed in the presence of the Russian tsar Alexander I, who was in Warsaw to open Parliament. At seven he wrote a Polonaise in G Minor, which was printed, and soon afterward a march of his appealed to the Russian grand duke Constantine, who had it scored for his military band to play on parade. Other polonaises, mazurkas, variations, ecossaises, and a rondo followed, with the result that, when he was 16, his family enrolled him at the newly formed Warsaw Conservatory of Music. At the age of 21 he settled in Paris and eventually became a French citizen. All of Chopin's compositions include the piano and almost all are for solo piano. His keyboard style is highly individual and often technically demanding; his own performances were noted for their nuance and sensitivity.



Gabriel Fauré (1845 - 1924) was a French composer and pianist. He was one of the foremost composers of his generation, and his musical style influenced many 20th-century composers. When he was born, Chopin was still composing, and by the time of Fauré's death, jazz and the atonal music of the Second Viennese School were being heard. Fauré was a student of Saint-Saëns.



Valery Gavrilin (1939 - 1999) - was born in Vologda, Russia. When he was 3, his father died while serving as a volunteer during the Siege of Leningrad. His mother was imprisoned when he was 10 and Gavrilin was sent to an orphanage in the village of Kovyrino near Vologda. At the age of 11, Gavrilin entered a school of music. At age 14 he entered music school at the Leningrad Conservatoire. In 1967 he was awarded the State Russian M.I. Glinka Prize for the cycle "Russian Notebook" - the youngest laureate to receive the prize. He is the composer of four ballets, music for many theatre performances and films, multiple pieces for voice and symphonic suites. He wrote numerous pieces for solo and 4-hand piano.



Franz Liszt (1811 - 1886) became renowned in Europe during the nineteenth century for his virtuosic skill as a pianist. He was said by his contemporaries to have been the most technically advanced pianist of his age, and in the 1840s he was considered by some to be perhaps the greatest pianist of all time. Liszt was also a well-known and influential composer, piano teacher, and conductor. He was a benefactor to other composers, including Richard Wagner, Hector Berlioz, Camille Saint-Saëns, Edvard Grieg and Alexander Borodin. As a composer, Liszt left behind an extensive and diverse body of work in which he influenced his forward-looking contemporaries and anticipated some 20th-century ideas and trends. He popularized a wide array of music by transcribing it for piano.



Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828) was a prolific composer, writing some 600 Lieder, nine symphonies (including the famous "Unfinished Symphony"), liturgical music, operas, some incidental music, and a large body of chamber and solo piano music. Appreciation of Schubert's music during his lifetime was limited, but interest in his work increased significantly in the decades following his death. Franz Liszt, Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms and Felix Mendelssohn, among others, discovered and championed his works in the 19th century. Today, Schubert is seen as one of the leading exponents of the early Romantic era and his music remains among the most frequently performed of any composer. We also like him because he wrote more 4-hand music than any of the major composers!