

The American Liszt Society

AN OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN LISZT SOCIETY, INC.

Liszt and Women - The 2025 ALS Festival at East Tennessee State University: A Resounding Tour de Force!

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Artwork by Jane Adams; reprinted by permission (janeadamsart)

Dr. Éva Polgár, Festival Director and Professor of Piano at ETSU, brilliantly cast a memorable event featuring scores of performers and scholars, who displayed their talents on themes inspired by the women in Liszt's circle.

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President's Message



Dear Lisztians,

I reminisce almost daily about the fabulous ALS festival Liszt and Women at Eastern Tennessee State University. Kudos to ALS board member and piano professor at ETSU Éva Polgár for her outstanding work as festival director. It was a terrific three days of music, scholarship, fellowship, and sumptuous repast. To recount the highlights of the festival in this column would be to simply restate the entire program from start to finish. Dr. Alan Walker reminded us of Liszt's famous toast: "make memories." We all certainly did that in Johnson City. In this world of artificial culture where the banal seems celebrated above all else, and the beauty of art, music, architecture, and literature are often neglected, festivals like that which we experienced at ETSU remain subtle road signs that draw us back to those things that really matter, including the beauty that saves the world. Congratulations to all the ALS participants who reminded us of those first things in life. Liszt would certainly nod in approval.

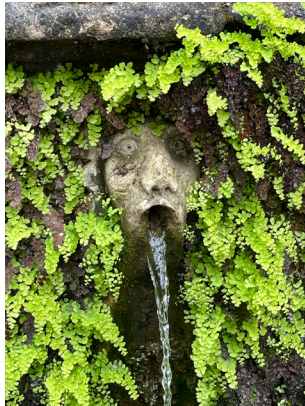
It is with sadness that the American Liszt Society mourns the passing of Hungarian pianist, professor, and scholar Tibor Szász, who departed this world on April 22, 2025. Dr. Szász was a long-time friend of the ALS, and a participant in important festivals in the past, including the 100th anniversary festival in Washington DC, 1986. I had the privilege to hear Tibor at Concordia College several years ago. He played three monumental recitals over the space of three days, featuring the music of Liszt, Beethoven, and Schubert each. He also gave a marvelous masterclass for piano students. His playing and teaching embodied artistry reminiscent of aristocratic old world musical virtue, and his collegial manner put our students at ease. His scholarship on the B minor sonata is highly esteemed on both sides of the Atlantic. We send our heartfelt condolences to his family, colleagues at the University of Freiburg, and friends. We shall all miss him.

Dr. Paul Barnes will host and direct our 2026 American Liszt Society Festival at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln on September 28-30. The festival theme will be Toward Re-Enchantment: Beauty as a Portal to the Sacred. Paul is a veteran ALS festival director (this will be his third at UN-L), and I suspect that he will serve up for us a banquet of spiritual and transcendental delights to sate our musical palettes. Stay tuned for information as it is posted on the ALS website. I hope to see each of you at UN-L in September. Meanwhile, I wish everyone of you safe, prosperous, and satisfying holidays and a new year of hope.

Excelsior!

Jay Hershberger, president

View from the Villa d'Este



Dear friends:

It is always a wonderful experience to attend the ALS Festivals, reconnect with old colleagues and friends, meet new Lisztians and hear their unique interpretations of standard repertoire, and follow thematic connections to a host of other more or less connected areas of exploration. Along with electrifying performances by the usual suspects, I have been particularly impressed with the ways the various Artistic Directors have been able to incorporate younger talents, often students enrolled at the host college. This has been particularly noticeable in recent years in the Ann Arbor, Athens, and Johnson City festivals. With the new faces showing up on festival programs, I also have seen a similar growth of the membership, as evidenced by the lengthy new member lists that have shown up in newsletters over the past couple years.

Although I have been a personal “Lisztian” all my adult life, I would consider myself a bit of a newbie to the Society, first becoming a member only ten years or so (having been invited to join and perform at the JMU festival in 2014 by my good friend and colleague Dr. Eric Ruple). In the ensuing years I have gotten not only to meet many terrific enthusiasts, but also to hear about many other prominent historical Lisztians – names that I have heard in all sorts of musical circles – but not from the standpoint of their exploits in and around the Society. Names such as Tom Mastroianni, Fernando Laires, Joseph Banowetz come to mind, to cite a few. I would think the new wave of members would also benefit from the understanding of the connections to the Society of these major musical figures.

Enter Terry McNeill – a longtime member and researcher/writer on an abundance of musical topics. He approached me at a recent festival with this precise idea – to write a few paragraphs about various early ALS members, illustrating their involvement and proponent of the music of Liszt. Thus is born a new series: ALS Spotlight. You will read the first installment, Spotlight on Gunnar Johansen in this issue, contributed by Terry McNeill, with the promise of more to come. Perhaps others might be encouraged to submit contributions to the Spotlight series as well – a way to preserve the memory of these monumental figures in the life of the Liszt Society.

I look forward to any and all submissions!

Best wishes,

Derek Parsons

The American Liszt Society

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Liszt and Women: The 2025 ALS Festival Revisited

In late October 2025, Lisztians from literally all over the globe gathered in the Blue Ridge mountains of eastern Tennessee to celebrate and share in the most recent festival devoted to the life and work of the Maestro. The theme this year was masterfully conceived and developed by **Dr. Éva Polgár**, whose creativity and attention to detail was on full display throughout the conference.

Dr. Polgár gives the following report on the Festival:

The American Liszt Society held its annual festival and conference titled “Liszt and Women” from October 23–25, 2025, at East Tennessee State University. The three-day event explored Liszt’s life, creative work, and its impact by focusing on women as sources of inspiration in his life and beyond. It celebrated the creative partners, students, family members, and active women composer-pianists of the Liszt Society whose artistry continues to keep his legacy alive.

The festival featured eighteen presentations and performances, along with two evening concerts. A total of 74 international Liszt scholars and performing artists shared their talent at the highest scholarly and artistic levels. More than 100 registered attendees participated. The full program is available on the American Liszt Society website: <https://www.americanlisztsociety.net/2025-program>

Following welcome remarks from **Alan Stevens**, ETSU Music Department Chair, **Jay Hershberger**, American Liszt Society President, and host **Éva Polgár**, the festival opened with performances by **Monica Song**, **Alan Woo**, and **Asiya Korepanova**. They offered a deep reflection on one of the most famous love stories of the Romantic era through the works of Brahms, Clara, and Robert Schumann. **David Gross** presented an engaging lecture-recital on Liszt pupil Marie Jaëll and her creative output. His session continued with the violin sonata by another Liszt student, Adele aus der Ohe, receiving an enchanting performance by the **Avita Duo** (**Katya Moeller**, violin, and **Ksenia Nosikova**, piano). This was paired with a multimovement composition by one of the most celebrated American female composers of the

turn of the century, Amy Beach. Her *Four Sketches* came alive under the captivating playing of **Yingzhou Hu**, **Manuel Vizurraga**, **Caroline Hong**, and **Hyeseon Jin**, while **Kinga Cserjési**, soprano, **Brynna Paros**, flutist, and **Éva Polgár** gave a colorful rendition of two songs by Beach.

The afternoon sessions showcased a wide spectrum of contemporary women composers, from Germaine Tailleferre and Ivette Herryman Rodriguez through Tania León and Emily Koh. Emily Koh’s *sang de glacier* for piano and toy piano received its world premiere by the brilliant **Liza Stepanova**. Her performance was followed by the high-spirited pianism of the **Happy Dog Duo** (**Nathan Cheung** and **Eric Tran**), Festival Program Consultant **José Raúl López**, and the piano duo of **Alyssa Conde** and **Alexandra Velgosha**. The link between past and present unfolded in **Paul Barnes’** solo piano transcription of Joan Tower’s *Piano Concerto “Homage to Beethoven.”* His lecture was insightful, and his playing reflected the transcendent power of Tower’s music, transforming into the immortal beauty of Beethoven’s genius, also captured by **Kevin McMillan**, baritone, and **Gabriel Dobner**, piano, in the complete cycle of *An die ferne Geliebte*.

The first evening concert opened with Liszt’s Ave Maria for a cappella choir, performed by ETSU’s **Greyscale** under **Matthew Potterton**’s direction in a compelling performance that drew the audience in. ETSU Piano Studio performers - **Csanád Barbarics**, **Emrick Butterfield**, **Khalil Ghazala**, **Justyna Maślanka**, and **Emma Switzer** - presented Ruth Schoenthal’s *Five Oceanic Preludes* with musical poise, a set recommended by José Raúl López.

Faculty pianists **Marissa Mathia** and **Louisa Peng** followed with the vibrant rhythms of Libby Larsen. **Gila Goldstein** introduced the audience to the emotional depth of Guggenheim Fellow Tamar Muskal’s compositional language, while **Asiya Korepanova** and **Jeffrey LaDeur** added energy before the break, including Korepanova’s own *Con Brio*. The festival attendees were then transported into the age of Lisztomania by **Kemal Gekić**. His performance reflected limitless technique, sound, and expression. He performed a selection of Chopin Etudes as a tribute to Liszt and Marie d’Agoult. In addition, he showcased his own remarkable artistry, culminating in Liszt’s *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2*.

Day two explored historic friendships and love entanglements inspired by literature, poetry, and other art forms. **Mark De Zwaan** led the audience through Byron’s poetry with his lecture “*Letters of a Voyager: Sand, Liszt, and Byron*,” illustrated by his own, **Vicente Della Tonia**, and **Ji Hyun Kim**’s evocative pianism. The morning continued with performances by American Liszt Society women composers. **Shu Tran** performed *Page 123 – It is not God and Because I can Change*, engaging listeners in an interactive search for the inner self. One of the festival’s most memorable moments was **Judith Neszlényi Pfeiffer**’s appearance and performance of her compositions. Her *Two Duos for Violin and Piano* were performed by the **Avita Duo** with flawless synergy, followed by the piano transcription of the Epilogue from *Ode (1956)*, played and introduced by Neszlényi herself. Both her playing and remarks resonated with added significance, reflecting on her departure from

Liszt and Women: The 2025 ALS Festival (continued)

Hungary during the 1956 revolution. **Phillip Bush, Gabriel Dobner, Kevin McMillan, Derek Parsons, Philip Powell, and Nicholas Susi** closed the morning sessions with epic performances of epic composers, Liszt and Wagner, drawing on the family dramas that shaped the enduring musical narratives of these masters.

The afternoon honored Fanny Hensel on the 220th anniversary of her birth. The program highlighted Fanny Hensel's soulful cycle, *Das Jahr*, preceded by her *Notturmo in G minor*, honoring her remarkable contribution to music. Adding a visual dimension, the opening page of each piece was projected on the screen alongside drawings depicting each month, created by her husband, Wilhelm Hensel. A stellar roster of performers brought Hensel's music and imagery together, offering the audience a rich celebration of her creative world: **Kate Boyd, Michael Boyd, Hyejin Cho, Maria Clapp, Jun-Hee Han, Joseph Kingma, Tiantian Liang, José Raúl López, Robert Satterlee, and Liza Stepanova**. Next in the program, *Family Ties II: The Mahlers* provided insight into Alma and Gustav Mahler's world, delivered by **Denise Gamez** and **Daniel Paul Horn** through witty remarks and sublime performances. Continuing the festival's commitment to musical discovery, **Dmitry Rachmanov** presented a lecture-recital, *Women's Voices from Russia, Ukraine and Beyond*, broadcast live across the United States via Steinway's SpirioCast, an invention that transmits real-time performances from one Spirio piano to another. This event marked the first SpirioCast in the Liszt Festival's history, extending the Society's reach to a global audience. Rachmanov's session thus blended his masterful musicianship with indispensable research and a progressive presentation.

The second evening concert closed the day on a high note, filled with emotion as pianists extraordinaire **Alexander Djordjevic, Gergely**

Kovács, Sergio Gallo, Lindsay Garritson, Jay Hershberger, Jeffrey LaDeur, Anthony Lee, and Sun-A Park performed the complete *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* in memory of Luiz de Moura Castro. As the evening unfolded, the atmosphere deepened when his wife, pianist Bridget de Moura Castro, greeted the audience and applauded the musicians, transforming the concert into a heartfelt celebration of life.

Recurring themes and new characters kept the mood elevated during the last day of the festival. **Khang Nguyen's** lecture on Liszt's selected female pupils and their compositional characteristics was illustrated in the sparkly interpretation of **David Brickle, Hyeeseon Jin, and Nguyen**, whose playing beautifully highlighted each musical example. After evoking Agathe Backer Grøndahl and Sophie Menter, attention turned to Carolyne zu Sayn-Wittgenstein and Liszt's dialogue. Tomasz Kamieniak performed *Glances de Woronince* with sensitivity and flair, composed on Wittgenstein's estate.

The Los Angeles International Liszt Competition presented its 2024 Competition winners in association with Tulipán Foundation, one of the main festival sponsors. Tulipán granted **Tony Yan Tong Chen, Dominik Yoder, and Annette Lin** the Réka Darida Educational Prize, enabling them a fully funded trip to Tennessee to showcase their talents. Their dazzling interpretation included both original Liszt works as well as transcriptions. **Mária Lökösházi**, winner of both voice divisions, completed the palette with her Hungarian musical training and

expressive tone, supported by **Gergely Kovács** on piano.

Building on the performances of the competition winners, the festival continued to highlight Liszt's legacy through exceptional scholarship and artistry, culminating in a lecture and musical finale. World-renowned and musical finale. World-renowned Liszt scholar **Dr. Alan Walker** offered an unforgettable lecture titled "*Liszt and the Fabulous Flower from Brazil*," in which he recounted a story with Hungarian connections concerning Olga Janina and her teacher, Liszt. **Dominique Caplier** assisted Walker's engaging and insightful presentation by providing a visual sequence, turning slides to support every detail of the storyline. The lecture concluded with an enthusiastic acknowledgment of Walker, his lecture, presence, and influence on the Society and beyond. At the height of its momentum, the 2025 American Liszt Society Festival concluded with fireworks, love, intrigue, death, and passion, all encapsulated in the piano paraphrases based on Händel, Mozart, Verdi, and Wagner's opera heroines. **Alexandre Dossin, Matthew Gianforte, Daniel Paul Horn** (who inspired the closing session), **Priscila Navarro, and Meeyoun Park** left the stage triumphant, with the audience in rapture, before the festivities continued at the closing banquet celebrating all participants of the three-day event marathon.

Festival director Éva Polgár, coordinator Csanád Barbarics, secretary Justyna Maślanka, and ETSU Student Ambassadors extend their heartfelt thanks to all presenters and performers, the Tulipán Foundation, Music Department faculty and staff, ETSU Martin Center for the Arts staff, and supporters whose contributions made the event a tremendous experience.

Excelsior!

Éva Polgár, Johnson City, Tennessee,



Highlights from Liszt and Women: The 2025 ALS Festival



Kemal Gekić toys with the crowd after a fabulous encore of the Liszt Hungarian Rhapsody #2



Liza Stepanova with her hands full in the World Premiere of Emily Koh's *sang de glacier* (2025)

Friday evening concert - *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*:
In Memoriam Luiz de Moura Castro



L-R: Bridget de Moura Castro, Jay Hershberger, Sergio Gallo, Gergely Kovács, Lindsay Garritson, Alexander Djordjevic, Sun-A Park, Jeffrey LaDeur, Anthony Lee

More from the 2025 ALS Festival



Dr. Alan Walker delivers a fascinating account of "Liszt and the Fabulous Flower from Brazil"



Judith Neszlényi Pfeiffer with the Avila Duo (Katya Moeller, Ksenia Nosikova) after a performance of her Duo for Violin and Piano (1977)



ETSU's incredible faculty and students who made the event so memorable:

First row left to right: Katelyn Maness, Emma Switzer, Justyna Maslanka, Dr. Éva Polgár, Dr. Monica Song.
Second row l-r: Chengchen Yu, Khalil Ghazala, Dr. Benjamin Caton, Csanád Barbarics, Brian Wilson, Gerald Nhakura
Last row: Emrick Butterfield, Shanglin Jia

FLIPFAC 2025 at The Ohio State University

FRANZ LISZT INTERNATIONAL PIANO FESTIVAL AND COMPETITION 2025 Crowns Brilliant New Laureates and Launches Alan Walker Budapest Prize



Hyeseon Jin, First Prize



Minyi Zhang, Second Prize



Chungho Lee, Third Prize

FLIPFAC 2025 at The Ohio State University concluded with a dazzling display of artistic excellence, international collaboration, and visionary support for the next generation of Liszt interpreters. The competition's final live round was shared globally via Steinway SpirioCast from Timashev Recital Hall. From a large pool of international applicants, fourteen semifinalists with renowned teachers advanced to the live rounds, representing leading studios and institutions: Csanád Barbarics (Hungary), Tony Yantong Chen (New Zealand), Eric Clark (USA), Robert Graziano (USA), Sungu Kang (South Korea), Hyeseon Jin (South Korea), Dae Hyeon Jung (South Korea), Chungho Lee (South Korea), Yeonju Lee (South Korea), Hidemi Minagawa (Japan), Seungkyu Oh (South Korea), Manuel Vizurraga (USA), Shuaizhi Wang (China), You Wu (China), and Minyi Zhang (China). After intense semifinal performances judged by Dr. Michael Boyd, Dr. Spencer Myer, and Dr. Ksenia Kosinova, five finalists advanced: Hyeseon Jin, Dae Hyeon Jung, Eric Clark, Minyi Zhang, and

Chungho Lee (with Csanád Barbarics as alternate). Three laureates claimed top prizes—1st: Hyeseon Jin (\$2,000), 2nd: Minyi Zhang (\$1,000), 3rd: Chungho Lee (\$500)—joined by special prizes for Best Performance of a Contemporary Work (Minyi Zhang, Ligeti *Musica Ricercata* selections) and Best Interpretation of a Liszt Composition (Chungho Lee, Liszt B minor Sonata). The elevated level of playing affirmed FLIPFAC's reputation as a major platform for emerging artist-teachers. A landmark feature was the deepened connection to the historic Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music in Budapest, offering the top laureate a debut recital there following the competition. After the close of the competition, a generous gift from eminent Liszt scholar Alan Walker made it possible to formalize this opportunity as the new Alan Walker Budapest Prize, supporting the winner's travel and debut appearance; among the five finalists, Hyeseon Jin received this prize (program scheduled for December 12, 2026), with discretionary adjudication by

Dr. Eva Polgar, who helped forge this vital Liszt Academy connection, and Prof. Gergely Kovács. FLIPFAC 2025 was directed by Dr. Caroline Hong and Dr. Ryan Behan, in affiliation with the American Liszt Society and its Ohio Chapter, in partnership with The Ohio State University School of Music and the College of Arts and Sciences. The success of this edition was further shaped by the dedication of New York Steinway's Christopher Wright, Ohio Chapter members Lynn Singleton, Jieun Lee, Shitong Sigler, and Ji-Hwang Gwak; Drs. Sigler and Gwak now join the core organizing team as Co-Assistant Directors, ensuring continued growth and innovation. Generous support from institutional partners and personal donors helped make this powerful, forward-looking celebration of Liszt's legacy possible. FLIPFAC returns October 24-27, 2027.

More information at flipfac.com.

- contributed by Dr. Caroline Hong

ALS Spotlight - Gunnar Johansen

The first in a series of articles spotlighting early ALS members.

It's rare to have a person enter a crowded room and instantly make people happily excited, not because of celebrity but because of intellectual and artistic effervescence. Gunnar Johansen did just that often, and was a pillar in the ALS and a genial colleague to early ALS members and Festivals.

Born in Copenhagen in 1906, Johansen studied with Busoni, Friedman and Petri, and on migrating to the USA in the 1930s with Earl Wild he was NBC's national radio pianist. Johansen became the first musician to be appointed artist in residence at an American university, holding the U. of Wisconsin professor post from 1939 to 1976.

In the 1950s he established his own Artist Direct label with a discography of essentially all of Liszt before Leslie Howard's work, 43 LPs of Bach, 7 Busoni and Friedman discs and many of the 400 improvised piano sonatas that he dubbed tape tapestries. Many were recorded on two double keyboard Emanuel Moor concert grands, the lower action frame featured 88 keys and the top 76. He spoke six languages, rode motorcycles and hosted in his home Frank Lloyd Wright, Henry Kissinger, German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, jet plane pioneer Bill Lear and microtonal scale composer Harry Partch.

I knew Gunnar from his Blue Mounds Wisconsin chalet home when presenting an ALS Festival lecture on his artistry, but much more at his Northern California forest seaside summer retreat where he spent four months each year composing, tending the orchards, chopping timber and managing his Leonardo Academy. The Academy focused on breakthroughs in cancer treatment and nuclear fusion. The rustic house had no phone or power, food was cooked on a large wood stove, and Gunnar played on an old Bechstein C and a Steinway upright, the latter's shipping crate propped up as a latrine shroud and covered with vines.



*photos courtesy of the author

My days with him mostly involved recorded interviews on his life, European culture and enjoying Lorraine, his fourth wife that he married in 1943. At this time he had given a massive series of 10 historical recitals, mirroring Anton Rubinstein and Gabilowitsch, and was recording Reger's two big sets of variations, Busoni's 10 Variations on a Chopin Prelude, BV 213a and the Concerto, and his own Pearl Harbor Sonata.

A promethean champion of Liszt and the ALS died in 1991 in Madison.

- contributed by Terry McNeill



New Members Fall 2025

Jackson Ward
Vladimir Nagy
Shu Tran
Maria Clapp
Ann Bosch
Kevin McMillan
Agnes Bajic
Janet Walsek
Adam Zhang
Hyeseon Jin
Minyi Zhang
Eric Clark
Chungho Lee
Dae Hyeon Jung
Csanád Barbarics
Huiping Cai
Thomas Lanners
Barbara Haggh-Huglo
Andrew Fowler
D.J. Cleavinger
Manuel Vizurraga

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Membership today!**

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Chapter News

CHICAGO/MIDWEST CHAPTER

This season the major event was group performance by students and faculty of Liszt's Weihnachtsbaum, in a mix of versions for solo piano and piano, four-hands on December 8, 2025. Other Liszt-related events in coming months include:

- Daniel Paul Horn's November solo faculty recital, which includes the Liszt Sonetto 104 and the Wagner-Liszt Liebestod, along with works of John Adams, Robert Schumann, Richard Danielpour, and Claude Debussy; and
- The final concert of the Wheaton College Symphony Orchestra's current season on April 25, 2026, with a program consisting of Liszt's Second Piano Concerto and Mahler's Fifth Symphony, with Benjamin Klemme conducting, and Daniel Paul Horn as soloist.

NEW YORK/NEW JERSEY CHAPTER

In June 2025, the Chapter presented two remarkable young pianists – Esteban Castro, and Fei-Fei.

Esteban Castro is a Brooklyn-based jazz pianist who started playing piano at age 3, and quickly started improvising and composing. In 2016, Esteban was the youngest-ever first prize winner of the Montreux Jazz Piano Solo Competition. In 2020, Esteban started studies at the Juilliard School on a full tuition scholarship, and graduated with a Bachelor of Music in 2024. More recently, he is the winner of the 2025 Gilmore Festival Bell Young Jazz Award.

Classical pianist Fei-Fei was featured prominently as a Cliburn finalist in the documentary film, *Virtuosity*, about the 2013 Cliburn Competition, which premiered on PBS in August 2015. She is a graduate of The Juilliard School where she studied with Dr. Yoheved Kaplinsky and she is currently pursuing a Doctoral of Musical Arts degree with pianist Yefim Bronfman at Manhattan School of Music. She

performed a program that included a stunning performance of the Liszt Piano Sonata.

We are pleased to announce that both Fei-Fei and Esteban Castro will perform again at next year's Piano Festival (June 27-28, 2026), which will again take place at the Cali School of Music at Montclair State University, and it will again be co-sponsored by the American Liszt Society.

Acclaimed pianist Emma Tahmizian performed an impressive and solo recital for the chapter on September 19, 2025. The concert took place at Klavierhaus in New York City and was live streamed as well. Her program included Schumann's *Dauidsbündlertänze* Op. 6, Scarlatti sonata K. 513 followed by Sebastian Currier's "Scarlatti Cadences" and "Brainstorm", Liszt Ballade No. 2 in B minor followed by four of his late works: *En Rêve* in B Major, *Bagatelle sans tonalité*, *Schlaflos! Frage und Antwort* in E minor, and *Sursum Corda*, in E Major (from *Années de Pèlerinage*, III). She ended her recital with two *Etudes* (No. 3 & 8) by Ronn Yedidia. A very unique artist, Emma's playing is always captivating, deep, and inspiring. The crowd which filled the space was enthusiastic and appreciative.

IOWA CHAPTER

The 2024-2025 season of the Key Change concert series was titled "French Impressions" in celebration of the 150th anniversary of Maurice Ravel. The majority of Ravel's piano repertoire was presented, as well as music by other French Romantic, Impressionistic, and 20th Century composers. The series' 6 concerts included several works by Liszt to honor his undeniable impact on the development of the French piano music. Each program was performed at the Concert Hall of the University of Iowa School of Music and Opus Concert Café of the Orchestra Iowa in Cedar Rapids, bringing together piano music lovers in both communities.

We celebrated another successful season of the Piano Sundays at Old Capitol, now in its 17th year. These four piano concerts featured individual University of Iowa applied piano studios in which faculty members sharing the stage with their students, performing several of Liszt's compositions.

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY CHAPTER

In March 2025 JMU ALS chapter collaborated with the collegiate MTNA chapter to host Dr. Caroline Hong for a masterclass and a guest artist recital. As part of that weekend's activities JMU graduate music students performed a recital of contemporary music and works by Liszt in the house of the artistic director of Staunton Music Festival - Jason Stell.

In November JMU piano students collaborated with local composers to perform and record newly composed works and to hear the performance of lesser-known existing works, such as pieces by Betty Jackson King and George Walker.

SAN FRANCISCO/BAY AREA CHAPTER

During the 2024-2025 season, the chapter continued its annual tradition begun by founding president William Wellborn with a concert featuring young pianists playing the works of Liszt, given in partnership with the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and now bearing Bill's name. In addition, the San Francisco International Piano Festival celebrated the 150th anniversary of Maurice Ravel this summer, tracing much of his unique piano writing and virtuosity to Liszt. As part of this celebration, Asiya Korepanova was featured in a stunning solo recital (including *Gaspard de la nuit*) along with performances by Gwendolyn Mok, Paul Sánchez, Stephen Prutsman, and more. The festival included a 3 part masterclass series which included young artists'

Chapter News

(continued)

performances of Liszt, Debussy, Granados, and Ravel; this masterclass series is inspired by Liszt in its mentorship approach to young artists and is offered free to the public.

SOUTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

- September 7, 2025 – Philip Powell performed (with Jeff Jones), a world premier song cycle, “The Ship,” by Dr. Andrew Fowler (a once and future member of the American Liszt Society) at Coastal Carolina University
- October 12, 2025 – Philip Powell, with Abby Martinez and Chad Hammer, performed Dvorak Piano Trio in E minor “Dumky” and the Shostakovich Piano Trio #2 in E minor at Coastal Carolina University.
- Coastal Carolina University is looking forward to hosting both Adrien Ramos, winner of the LA International Liszt Competition and the winner of the 2025 Franz Liszt International Piano Festival and Competition at The Ohio State University.

SOUTH FLORIDA CHAPTER

The South Florida Chapter of the American Liszt Society has presented 2 concerts for the initial 2025-26 season.

On October 17, Italian pianist Sandro Ivo Bartoli, who recorded the complete keyboard sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti during the pandemic, performed 8 of this master’s works, Schubert’s 1st set of Impromptus and, after the interval, Liszt’s Two Legends and the rarely heard Grosses Konzertsolo. His playing combined masterful coloristic effects and unbridled bravura.

On October 18, duo pianists Lindsay Garritson and Anastasiya Naplekova offered a recital of chamber and orchestral transcriptions 4-hand, including Kirchner’s arrangement of Schumann’s Piano Quintet, Ravel’s La Valse, and Liszt’s Les Préludes.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

- April 17-18, 2025—Dr. Robert Satterlee @ CSUN: Guest Artist Recital: works by Schubert, Bartok & Chopin. Piano masterclass.
- November 22, 2025—ALS SoCal Chapter biennial Festival @ Pasadena Conservatory: Recitals, Masterclasses, Workshops & Lectures. Guest Artists Dr. Stephen Cook & Dr. Vatche Mankerian

<https://americanlisztsocietysocal.org/>

WEST TEXAS CHAPTER

The West Texas Chapter of the American Liszt Society hosted several performances throughout 2024-25, including the opening of chapter president Richard Fountain’s ongoing cycle of the complete Beethoven sonatas and symphonies (in Liszt’s transcriptions). The first year of the cycle included the sonatas through op. 14, the op. 49 sonatas, and the First Symphony. Fountain also continued Liszt’s legacy of innovative pedagogy via distance-teaching initiatives using Steinway’s Spirio | r technology, working with talented high school students at the Talkington School for Young Women Leaders in Lubbock. The chapter also hosted the Bergonzi Trio (John Gilbert, violin; George Work, cello; Richard Fountain, piano) in a program of Haydn’s E-major and Brahms’ B-major trios in November 2024. Finally, the chapter continues to support the annual WBU Piano Competition, hosted each spring at Wayland Baptist University, which provides many 6-12th grade pianists in the local region with important opportunities for performance and critique.



Member News



Gabriel Dobner has released a new album with acclaimed German tenor Gerhard Siegel. A Grammy Award winning tenor, Gerhard Siegel has been singing regularly at the Met since 2004 in a number of productions, including Wagner’s Ring Cycle, Wozzeck, Lulu, Hänsel and Gretel, Salome, among others. Gerhard also makes regular appearances at Covent Garden, La Scala, Paris Opera, Munich, Berlin, among many others.

Gerhard and Gabriel have been working together since 2004 with their first concert taking place at the Nürnberg State Opera House. Their newly released recording of Mahler, Siegel, Schreker, and Schumann is the duo’s fourth recording project and distributed under the Hänssler Classic label.

Between May & October 2025 pianist **Gila Goldstein** performed solo concerts in Toronto, Canada (Heliconian Club), in Great Barrington, MA (High Peaks Festival), at the Changzhou University & Shanghai Music Publishing House in China, and at the ALS festival at ETSU in Johnson City, TN. She also taught and gave master classes at the High Peaks Festival, Rebecca Penneys Piano Festival in Florida, Changzhou University and the Shanghai and Shenzhen Conservatories of Music in China. She received another glowing review, this time from the United Kingdom, on her album "24 Preludes

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Member News

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of Dusk and Dawn" by Ronn Yedidia, here is a quote and a link to the full review.

"Gila Goldstein breathes life into the compositions of Ronn Yedidia in a heartwarming, subtle way. Her playing is honest and painstakingly beautiful, reflecting the original compositions subject matter with raw emotion."

http://www.reviewgraveyard.com/00_revs/r2025/music/25-02-07_ronyeddia.html

Éva Polgár has enjoyed a vibrant and productive summer and fall season, highlighted by several significant concert projects. Among these was a special performance of Franz Liszt's melodrama *Des toten Dichters Liebe*, S.349, presented in commemoration of the 200th birth anniversary of Hungarian novelist Mór Jókai. The work was played by performing

artist Gábor Mohai alongside Éva, and the program also featured poetry by Sándor Petőfi—Jókai's close friend and one of Hungary's most celebrated poets—whose wife inspired Jókai's ballade later set to music by Liszt. The centerpiece of this three-concert series was the performance at the Franz Liszt Museum in Budapest on May 24.

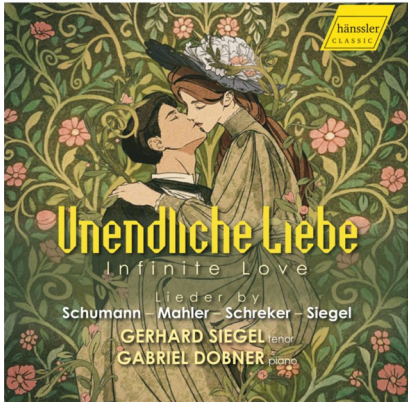
Éva continued her season with a chamber music recital broadcast live on Hungarian National Radio on June 19. Shortly thereafter, she joined the inaugural Excelsior Piano Academy in Sondershausen, Germany, organized by Dr. Richard Fountain. The Academy's piano faculty included Dr. Mark Franklin, Dr. Clara Christian, Dr. Richard Fountain, and Éva. Students and faculty participated in a rich artistic and cultural program, touring Leipzig and Weimar, attending András Schiff's concert at the Leipzig Gewandhaus, and engaging in daily devotionals, lessons, master classes,

recitals, seminars, and a pedagogy workshop.

Before traveling to Hungary for her later projects, Éva also appeared at PianoFest 2025 at Georgia State University's Perimeter College, where she gave both a solo recital and a masterclass at the invitation of festival host Dr. Vicente Della Tonia.

Following PianoFest, Éva turned her attention to solo and ensemble repertoire by Liszt, Bartók, Kodály, and Ligeti through her collaborative formation Carpathian Impressions, an ensemble featuring classical pianist László Borbély—head secretary of the Hungarian Liszt Society—and jazz pianist Gábor Varga. The trio presented two commemorative concerts honoring the 80th anniversary of Béla Bartók's death: one at the Liszt Academy in Budapest and another in Ljubljana at the Akademija za glasbo Univerze.

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Recently released Siegel/Dobner CD (see p. 11)



From Liszt Festival 1986

l-r:

- PAUL HUME, music critic, Washington Post
- JON NEWSOM, curator, Music Division, Library of Congress
- ALAN WALKER, biographer of Liszt
- JACQUES BARZUN, biographer of Berlioz
- TIBOR SZASZ, Hungarian pianist and Liszt scholar
- NICOLAS SLONIMSKY, lexicographer

Next Issue Deadline:

March 31, 2026

Contributions to the newsletters are welcomed and encouraged! Please send information to

dparsons@furman.edu

Photos should be high resolution b/w or color. Thank you!