

The Legacy of Solomon Mikowsky

FESTIVAL CONCERT

Featuring **Adam Kent** (BM '86, MM '87, Precollege Faculty), piano

Anna Khanina, piano,

Mijung Lee (PC '08, BM '11, MM '13, DMA '19), piano

Kyriacos Souroullas (PS '11, DMA '19), piano

Po-Wei Ger (BM '18), piano,

and **Weiwei Zhai** (BM '13, MM '15, DMA '22), piano

This year's performance season has been inspired by a unifying theme: *Humanity in Harmony: Rituals, Resistance, and Resilience*. We hope during this election year, the biggest in human history with over half the world's population having the opportunity to vote in 72 countries, that this theme reflects the power of the arts to unite us even in moments of discord and differences. The collective experience of collaboration – creating together – reminds us that even in our differences we can find common ground, stand up to tyranny and oppression, and elevate our work as artists to fulfill the hope and promise of a better tomorrow.

James Gandre, President

Joyce Griggs, Executive Vice President and Provost

Faculty and Administration of the Artistic Planning Committee



**Council on
the Arts**

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2025 | 7:30 PM
GORDON K. & HARRIET GREENFIELD HALL

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PROGRAM

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN
(1810–1849)

Fantasia in F Minor, Op. 49
Weiwei Zhai, piano

EDVARD GRIEG
(1843–1907)

Lyric Pieces, Op. 57
Vanished days
Secret
She dances

CLAUDE DEBUSSY
(1862–1918)

Images, Book I
Reflets dans l'eau
Anna Khanina, piano

ISAAC ALBÉNIZ
(1860–1909)

Iberia, Book 1
Evocación
El Puerto
Adam Kent, piano

Intermission

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

Ballade No. 4 in F Minor, Op. 52

Po-Wei Ger, piano

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune, L. 86

(ARR. M. RAVEL, 1910)

MAURICE RAVEL

Feria from *Rapsodie espagnole*

(1875–1937)

Kyriacos Souroullas, piano

Mijung Lee, piano

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Adam Kent (BM '86, MM '87, MSM Precollege Faculty)

Recently appointed to the Music Faculty of the State University of New York at Oneonta, pianist Adam Kent has performed in recital, as a soloist with orchestra, and in chamber music throughout the United States, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, and Latin America. A winner of the American Pianists Association Fellowship and Simone Belsky Music Awards, Dr. Kent also received top prizes in the Thomas Richner, the Juilliard Concerto, and the Kosciuszko Foundation Chopin Competitions, and is a recipient of the Arthur Rubinstein Prize and the Harold Bauer Award. Dr. Kent made his New York recital debut at Weill Recital Hall in 1989 and has been featured on WQXR, WNYC, WFUV, WVOX, and Sirius Radio stations. Chamber music has been an important part of Dr. Kent's concert life, most recently with the Damocles Trio, which has performed both in the United States and abroad. The group's recording of Joaquín Turina's complete piano trios and quartet with Emerson Quartet violist Lawrence Dutton was released by Claves Records in 2004, followed up by their recording of Heitor Villa-Lobos's complete piano trios and Oscar Lorenzo Fernández's Trio Brasileiro in 2009.

Spanish music has been a specialty of Dr. Kent, whose advocacy has been acknowledged by the Spanish government on numerous occasions. In 2011, King Juan Carlos I of Spain honored the pianist by bestowing Spain's Orden al Mérito Civil, and the Consulate General of Spain in NY underwrote Dr. Kent's course on the history of Spanish music at Brooklyn College. The Spanish Consulate has also sponsored numerous appearances by Dr. Kent at NY's Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, and the Spanish Ministry for Education and Culture awarded him a grant for Música por doquier/Hispanic Music Everywhere, a year-long celebration of Spanish and Latin-American in NYC with the Damocles Trio and Spanish composer and conductor Salvador Brotons. The Foundation for Iberian Music at the CUNY Graduate Center and the King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center at NYU have also sponsored several of Dr. Kent's Hispanic-themed projects, including commissions of new works by Tania León, Salvador Brotons, Miguel-Ángel Roig-Francolì, and others.

Dr. Kent's critically acclaimed recording of the complete piano works of Ernesto Halffter is available on Bridge Records, and a recent performance of *Book I* of Albéniz's *Iberia suite* was praised in the *Indianapolis Star* as "Albénizian to the core...his suave legato touch wedded to a tone with an Old World patina about it." *Excelsior* of Mexico City enthused about a recent all-Spanish recital, "Adam Kent

brought not only magnificent technical ability to the music but managed to go beyond the printed page, delving into the essence of what the composer sought to express.” Dr. Kent’s expertise in this repertory has also extended to interviews and performances in several recent documentaries on Spanish composers Enrique Granados and Manuel de Falla. At present, a recording of Tania León’s complete piano music is in the works, as well as a documentary on Isaac Albéniz. Summers find Dr. Kent serving as Director of Cultural Outreach at the Burgos International Music Festival in Spain and teaching and performing at the Summit Music Festival in N.Y. and the Cursos de Verano of the Fundación Princesa de Asturias in Oviedo. Recent performances include a concert of works by Bizet composer Miguel-Angel Roig-Francoli at Carnegie Hall, a recital at N.Y.C.’s (le) poisson rouge broadcast on The Classical Network radio station, the world-premiere of a newly-written piano trio by Argentine composer Sebastian Zubieta’s at N.Y.C.’s Look and Listen Festival, performances with the Westchester Chamber Symphony and the New Jersey Baroque Orchestras, concerts in Havana, Cuba and a recital of works by Tania León at the University of California at Riverside.

Dr. Kent received a D.M.A. from The Juilliard School, where he studied with Jerome Lowenthal and served as an adjunct professor. His dissertation, “The Use of Catalan Folk Materials in the Works of Federico Mompou and Joaquín Nin-Culmell,” was awarded the school’s Richard F. French Prize, and his writings have appeared in *Clavier*, *Music in Art* and *Cambridge Scholars* journals and a Spanish-language monograph on Xavier Montsalvatge published by the Spanish Society of Authors and Editors. He holds B.M. and M.M. degrees from Manhattan School of Music, where he studied with Solomon Mikowsky. Dr. Kent is a long-standing member of the Piano Faculty of Manhattan School of Music Precollege Division and has served as Music Director of Community Unitarian Universalist Congregation in White Plains, NY since 1990.

Anna Khanina, piano

Anna Khanina has been praised for her “brilliant technique, musicality, and impeccable taste” (*Ibbenbuebrener Zeitung*).

Ms. Khanina is based in New York and enjoys a successful performing career. She regularly appears as a soloist and with chamber ensembles in Europe, the United States, Canada, and Israel. She has performed at such venues as 92 Y Kaufman Hall, Symphony Space, Staller Center for Arts, Trinity Church, Yamaha Piano Salon in New York, Dame Myra Hess Concert Series, Pianoforte Chicago, Ganz Hall at Roosevelt University, DePaul University in Chicago, Georg

Phillip Telemann Hall, Muendener Schloss, in Germany. Her concerts were live broadcast on WFMT Chicago (2007, 2011, 2014), The Voice of Music radio from Jerusalem Music Centre (2008), McGraw Young Artists Showcase WQXR New York (2011), and wiox.org (2011).

Anna Khanina's long list of awards includes the prizes at the Val Tidone International Piano Competition, the Second International Piano Competition in Panama, the Seventh International Competition Ciutat de Carlet, the Grieg Competition in Oslo, the Nueva Acropolis Competition in Madrid, and the Classica Nova Competition in Hannover.

Along with her performing career, Ms. Khanina remains a dedicated teacher. She is currently on the faculty at the 92nd Street Y. Her students have appeared at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, and successfully participated in numerous national competitions.

Anna started her musical education at the age of five, and in 1996 she graduated with honors from the famous Gnessin School of Music in Moscow for gifted children. Upon graduation, she immigrated to Germany, where she completed her Master's Degree and an Artist Diploma under the tutelage of Professor Bernd Goetzke at the Hannover University of Music, Drama and Media. At the same time, while pursuing her studies in Hannover, Anna simultaneously pursued a second Master's degree in Performance at the Gnessin Academy of Music, where she graduated with honors in 2004.

Ms. Khanina holds a Doctoral Degree from the State University of New York at Stony Brook where she was a scholarship student of Gilbert Kalish.

Mijung Lee (PC '08, BM '11, MM '13, DMA '19)

Mijung Lee made her orchestral debut at the age of 11 performing Mozart's Concerto No.23 in A Major with the Seoul Philharmonic and was accepted to Manhattan School of Music Precollege Division under the tutelage of Solomon Mikowsky. She has appeared in principal halls such as Lincoln Center in NYC and at the Sidney Opera House in Australia and has performed in Spain, the Canary Islands, Germany, Italy, Cyprus, and Greece. Mijung Lee won prizes in major competitions such as the Third Junior Chopin Piano Competition, and Nicholas Flagello Competition, and the World Music Artists International Competition by the IAF Art Foundation to name a few. Mijung Lee holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the MSM where she completed both programs in five years. At age 23, she was offered the Presidential Scholarship as well as a fellowship for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree, where she continued

her studies with Dr. Mikowsky. She served as an instructor of secondary piano courses and keyboard techniques at the undergraduate and graduate levels, while also serving as the coordinator of the Keyboard Skills department under Dr. Marjean Olson. She is currently a recording pianist at Lindeblad Piano Restoration and a faculty at Lindeblad School of Music.

Kyriacos Souroullas (PS '11, DMA '19)

Described as an “artist with elegance, good taste, and powerful temperament... possessing of a beautiful sound” (Juan Pinera, CMBF Radio Musical Nacional), Greek-Cypriot-born pianist Kyriacos Souroullas has appeared across Europe, the United States and Canada. He was the 2nd prize winner of the 10th Panmusica International Piano Competition in Vienna, Austria, and the First prize winner of the 2010-2011 Dora Zaslavsky Koch Concerto Competition in New York. His debut CD featuring works for piano by Cyprus-born pianist and composer Christodoulos Georgiades has been broadcasted by CyBC Radio (RIK), New York’s WWFM as part of “The Piano Matters” program hosted by well-known author and pianist David Dubal as well as by the Third Program of ERT (Greek Radio and Television).

Kyriacos holds the Professional Studies Certificate and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from the Manhattan School of Music under the tutelage of Solomon Mikowsky, where he taught private piano lessons and keyboard skills classes at the undergraduate and graduate levels. He is currently a recording pianist at Lindeblad Piano Restoration and a faculty at Lindeblad School of Music.

Po-Wei Ger (BM '18)

Born on December 6, 1995, pianist Po-Wei Ger graduated with a Master of Musical Arts degree from the Yale School of Music under the guidance of Dr. Melvin Chen in 2021. In 2022, he entered the Manhattan School of Music, pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree under the guidance of Dr. Solomon Mikowsky. He currently studies with Jiayin Li.

Po-Wei began studying piano with Ms. Jia-li Shu at the age of seven. At ten, he continued his studies with Dr. Ming-Hui Lin, a piano faculty member at the National Taiwan Normal University. During his Bachelor of Music studies with Dr. Solomon Mikowsky at the Manhattan School of Music, Po-Wei collaborated with the Cuban National Symphony Orchestra in both 2015 and 2016. He was also a prizewinner in the Panama International Piano Competition in 2016 and 2018. In April 2021, Po-Wei won the 2nd Prize, the Chamber Music Prize, and the Audience Prize at the Premio Jaén competition in Spain.

An avid chamber musician, Po-Wei has participated in a masterclass with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, guided by Gilbert Kalish. He and his chamber partners won the Lillian Fuchs Chamber Music Competition at the Manhattan School of Music and have performed in the Vista Chamber Music Series at the Yale School of Music. Po-Wei, along with Chao-Chih Chen and Tzu-Wei Huang, formed the clarinet trio Trio Astralis and won the Youth Chamber Music Program at Eslite Bookstore, the leading bookstore chain in Taiwan. He performed at the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival in 2019 and 2022, as well as at the Taos School of Music in New Mexico in the summer of 2021. He also performed at the Yellow Barn Music Festival in Putney, Vermont, in the summers of 2023 and 2024. He currently teaches at the JCC Thurnauer School of Music.

Weiwei Zhai (BM '13, MM '15, DMA '22)

Dr. Weiwei Zhai is an accomplished pianist, educator, and cultural ambassador. Her musical prowess was evident from an early age, winning a national competition in China at 15 years old. Dr. Zhai holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the Manhattan School of Music, where she studied under the guidance of legendary pedagogue Dr. Solomon Mikowsky. Her musical journey began at the Affiliated School of the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, laying the foundation for her future success.

A decorated musician, Dr. Zhai has garnered numerous accolades throughout her career, including first prize in the Eisenberg-Fried Concerto Competition at the Manhattan School of Music and third prize in the Kazakhstan International Piano Competition. Her performances have graced prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, Merkin Hall, and Symphony Space in New York City, as well as international stages in Italy and China. She has received invitations to give performances and presentations at renowned institutions, including Ithaca College, John Jay College, and Rutgers University.

In recent years, Dr. Zhai has been stretching the traditional boundaries of classical music by infusing it with Latin flair. For the past two years, she has been collaborating with Puerto Rican musician Dr. José Maldonado, creating a unique fusion of Chinese traditional folk music, Puerto Rican rhythms, and standard classical repertoire. This innovative approach showcases Dr. Zhai's versatility and her commitment to bridging diverse musical traditions. With a rich background in both Eastern and Western classical music traditions, and now exploring Latin influences, Dr. Weiwei Zhai continues to inspire and educate the next generation of musicians while pushing the boundaries of classical piano repertoire and performance.

ABOUT SOLOMON MIKOWSKY (1936–2024)

Solomon Mikowsky – who possessed a singular pedagogical genius which he brought to his work at Manhattan School of Music – joined the MSM Precollege faculty in 1969 and the College faculty in 1974. With 55 years of service to our institution, Solomon taught for more than half of MSM’s 105-year history. Included in Benjamin Saver’s *The Most Wanted Piano Teachers in the USA* and cited by *Clavier* as “one of the world’s most sought-after artist teachers,” Mikowsky stands as one of this country’s giants of music pedagogy.



Solomon approached his inextinguishable passion for teaching with a dry wit and immense skill as

both musician and teacher. Over five-plus decades, he taught into being a living musical legacy – an expansive community of former students who are performing and teaching at many of the world’s greatest performance halls and institutions of higher education (including 11 who have taught at MSM’s College and Precollege). France’s *Sur Exprès* referred in an article to Solomon’s “magical ability to develop his piano students into artists,” a contention evidenced by this partial list of those former students enjoying international careers, including Alexandra Beliakovich, Jenny Q. Chai, Jovianney Emmanuel Cruz, Gustavo Díaz-Jerez, Simone Dinnerstein, Wael Farouk (MSM faculty), Po-Wei Ger, Kirill Gerstein, Kookhee Hong, Adam Kent (MSM Precollege faculty), Kho Woon Kim, Kyu Yeon Kim, Youngho Kim, Sofya Melikyan, José Ramón Mendez, Misha Namirovsky, Edward Neeman, Yuan Sheng, Aaron Shorr, Tatiana Tessman, Chun Wang, Xiayin Wang, Yungwook Yoo, Jie Yuan, and current Co-Heads of MSM’s Piano department Alexandre Moutouzkin and Inesa Sinkevych.

Moreover, we see Solomon’s pedagogical legacy and philanthropic devotion to the institution live on in highly visible fashion on the MSM campus. A longtime MSM donor and member of the Galaxy Society, Solomon made two

generous gifts which led to the creation of the Solomon Mikowsky Recital Hall, inaugurated in 2010 and expanded in 2018, in conjunction with the School's Centennial. Many of those same former students mentioned above returned to perform at both the hall's inauguration and its expansion and reopening eight years later.

A Steinway Artist, Solomon was a recipient of the MSM President's Medal for Distinguished Service and was celebrated during the pandemic with the MSM website presentation of seven sets of Mozart's *Twinkle Variations* featuring Solomon and 47 of his students and an 85th-birthday celebration featuring him and 75 of his students performing in *A Birthday Celebration!*

Born in Cuba to Polish parents, Solomon received his early training with César Pérez Sentenat, and then, awarded scholarships by the Cuban government and The Juilliard School, he continued his studies in New York City with Sascha Gorodnitzki, receiving BM and MM degrees from Juilliard and completing his studies with a doctorate from Teachers College of Columbia University. In addition to his foundational service on the MSM faculty, Solomon's incredible life journey also saw him teaching and giving master classes at leading conservatories as well as judging international competitions around the world.

This festival honors the pedagogical brilliance of Solomon, whose work at MSM has shaped generations of artists, performers, and music educators. His students, who now hold pivotal roles across Asia, Europe, and the Americas, will come together over the course of this season to pay tribute to his legacy.

WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

Dr. Mikowsky played a crucial role in my growth, both as a musician and as a person. He is a generous, caring, and insightful educator. Beyond imparting valuable knowledge, he encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone and continually evolve. My professor emphasized the importance of work ethic and creativity, fostering both in his students. I am deeply grateful for all the guidance and support he has given me.

Weirwei Zhai (BM '13, MM '15, DMA '22)

Piano Faculty, Bloomingdale School of Music and Lindeblad School of Music

Having studied with Dr. Mikowsky for 14 years, it is difficult to describe all his influence in a few words. One of the last repertoires he worked on with me was J. S. Bach's Goldberg Variations—in which, after a few lessons, he advised me to go study with the renowned Bach scholar Kenneth Cooper. Mikowsky felt that this particular composition was beyond his expertise, and he was curious to learn from another pedagogue. When I returned from working with Cooper, I distinctly recall Mikowsky's exact words: "Was I far off?" To which I remarked: "Not at all!"

Despite all his legacies, nothing stopped him from being curious and eager to learn. It is something that we as artists should remember to do.

Mijung Lee (PC '08, BM '11, MM '13, DMA '19)

Piano Faculty, Lindeblad School of Music

We have received an overwhelming number of tributes from Dr. Mikowsky's friends, colleagues, and former students.

Please visit the link below to see the ongoing additions to these reflections:

