



SAN FRANCISCO  
**PERFORMANCES**

presents...

**FEDERICO COLLI** | Piano  
*Subscriber Gift Concert*

Tuesday, November 16, 2021 | 7:30pm  
Herbst Theatre

**SCARLATTI**

**Seven Sonatas**

*in F Minor, K.19*  
*in G Major, K.63*  
*in G Major, K.144*  
*in D Major, K.430*  
*in D Minor, K.32*  
*in G Major, K.431*  
*in D Minor, K.1*

**MOZART**

**Piano Sonata in B-flat Major, K.333**

*Allegro*  
*Andante cantabile*  
*Allegretto grazioso*

**INTERMISSION**

**SCHUBERT**

*(arr. Maria  
Grindberg)*

**Fantasy in F Minor, D.940**

*Allegretto molto moderato*  
*Largo*  
*Allegro vivace*  
*Tempo I*

**BACH**

*(arr. Ferruccio  
Busoni)*

**Chaconne from the Partita No. 2 in D Minor for Unaccompanied Violin,  
BWV 1004**

**This program is made possible by the generous support of George and Camilla Smith.**

**Federico Colli** is represented by IMG Artists

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## ARTIST PROFILE

*San Francisco Performances presents the San Francisco recital debut of Federico Colli.*

Praised by *The Daily Telegraph* for “his beautifully light touch and lyrical grace” and called by *Gramophone* “one of the more original thinkers of his generation,” **Federico Colli** has been rapidly gaining worldwide recognition for his compelling, unconventional interpretations and clarity of sound. The remarkable originality and highly imaginative, philosophical approach to music-making have distinguished Federico’s performances and recordings as miraculous and multidimensional. Federico’s first release of Sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti, recorded on Chandos Records, for whom he is an exclusive recording artist, was awarded “Recording of the Year” by Presto Classical. The second volume of Scarlatti’s Sonatas was named “Recording of the Month” by both *BBC Music Magazine* and *International Piano Magazine*, and it has been chosen by *BBC Music Magazine* as one of the best classical albums released in 2020.

Following his early successes, including the Gold Medal at the 2012 Leeds International Piano Competition, the *International Piano* magazine selected him as one of the “30 pianists under 30 who are likely to dominate the world stage in years to come.” Henceforth, Federico went on to perform with renowned orchestras including the Mariinsky Orchestra and St. Petersburg Philharmonic, Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic, BBC Symphony and BBC Philharmonic, Royal Liverpool Phil-

harmonic, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, RAI Symphony Orchestra, and Orchestre national d’Île-de-France. He has also worked with esteemed conductors including Valery Gergiev, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Yuri Temirkanov, Juraj Valčuha, Ion Marin, Thomas Søndergård, Ed Spanjaard, Vasily Petrenko, Sir Mark Elder, Dennis Russel Davies and Sakari Oramo.

One of the most prolific and intriguing recitalists, Federico showcased his mastery in some of the world’s most famous halls such as Vienna Musikverein and Konzerthaus, Berlin Konzerthaus, Munich Herkulessaal, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Amsterdam Royal Concertgebouw, London Royal Albert Hall and Royal Festival Hall, Prague Rudolfinum, Paris Philharmonie, Rome Auditorium Parco della Musica, Tokyo Nikkei Hall, Hong Kong City Hall, Seoul Kumho Art Hall, New York Lincoln Center and Chicago Bennet Gordon Hall. He has appeared in festivals such as Klavier Festival Ruhr in Dortmund, Dvořák International Festival in Prague, Chopin and His Europe International Festival in Warsaw, Lucerne Festival, and Ravinia Festival in Chicago.

Federico’s concerts in the 2021–22 season include Grieg *Piano Concerto* with the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, Bartók *Piano Concerto No. 3* with Orchestra di Padova e del Veneto, Mozart *Piano Concerto K.488* with the Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana, Beethoven *Piano Concerto No. 4* with the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI, and Shostakovich *Piano Concerto No. 2* with The Sichuan Orchestra of China. Recital appearances this season include the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, Stockholm Konzerthuset, Vienna Ehrbar Saal for the Bechstein Piano Se-

ries, Leeds Town Hall, a recital tour in North America (San Francisco Performances, Gilmore Rising Stars Series and Vancouver Chopin Society), and a duo recital with violinist Josef Špaček at the Prague Rudolfinum.

In addition to live performances, Federico maintains a busy recording schedule. His future releases on Chandos include a Russian project focused on Shostakovich and Prokofiev, as well as a multi-album Mozart project with solo and chamber music repertory, spread over five years. Out of his love for the music of Mozart, during the pandemic Federico created an educational series of short videos for his YouTube channel designed to re-discover Mozart's *Fantasy in C Minor* K. 475 and place Mozart's musical ideas in a historical and cultural context. Inspired by the mystery surrounding the genesis of the piece, Federico created an invigorating story based on his deep-dive research into Mozart's biographies, letters and 18th-century history and culture.

Born in Brescia in 1988, he has been studying at the Milan Conservatory, Imola International Piano Academy and Salzburg Mozarteum, under the guidance of Sergio Marengoni, Konstantin Bogino, Boris Petrushansky and Pavel Gililov.

## PROGRAM NOTES

### Seven Sonatas

#### DOMENICO SCARLATTI

(1685–1757)

Domenico Scarlatti is remembered today for his 550 keyboard sonatas, most of them written in Madrid over the final decade of his life. Scarlatti called these pieces *esercizi* (“exercises”), and while they are not actually in sonata form, they look ahead to that form as it would develop across the eighteenth century. They are in one movement, but in binary form, built on themes of contrasting tonalities. Scarlatti would have played them on the harpsichord (or *gravicembalo*, as it was known in Spain), and these sonatas are remarkable for the brilliance of the keyboard technique he demands: fast runs, hand crossings, arpeggios across the range of the keyboard, great cascades of sound, and rapid repetition of notes. The sonatas are quite brief—usually between three and five minutes—but in these short spans Scarlatti creates miniature worlds full of drama, excitement, color, and beauty.

### Piano Sonata in B-flat Major, K.333

#### WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

(1756–1791)

Mozart published the *Sonata in B-flat Major* in Vienna in 1784, when he was 28. For many years this sonata was thought to have been composed during Mozart's visit to Paris five years earlier, in 1778. During that visit Mozart renewed his acquaintance with Johann Christian Bach, youngest son of Johann Sebastian. The two had first met in London in 1764 when Bach was 30 and Mozart was 8; they had played duets then with Mozart seated in Bach's lap, and the two retained a musical respect and affection. Some critics were quick to detect the influence of Johann Christian Bach on this sonata and believed that Mozart had

composed it in Paris, though more recent evidence has shown that this sonata was written in November 1783.

But in fact, J.C. Bach did have a strong influence on this sonata. The opening theme of the *Sonata in B-flat Major* bears an extremely close similarity to the opening of J.C. Bach's *Piano Sonata in G Major, Opus 17, No. 4*, which Bach had shown to Mozart in Paris five years earlier. J.C. Bach composed in the galant style fashionable in mid-century Paris, a style that emphasized attractive melodies, clear textures, and an absence of contrapuntal complexities. Mozart had little use for the musical life of Paris, but he did admire Johann Christian, and the close similarity between these themes may be a gesture of admiration by Mozart for J.C. Bach's keyboard writing. Mozart's opening *Allegro*, very much in *galant* style, is graceful and smooth: even its big chords suddenly melt away into relaxed music, and the brief agitation at the beginning of the development does not really roil the waters.

Mozart moves to E-flat major for the *Andante cantabile*. The really interesting part of this movement comes at the beginning of its second half, where this theme is taken through some daring modulations—there is a wildness to the harmonic freedom here, even in music otherwise so gentle.

But the most striking movement of all may be the last. This *Allegretto grazioso*, a rondo, opens with a poised central theme—and then come the surprises. The episodes are so beautifully worked out that each becomes an interlude with its own distinct character, and along the way even the rondo theme itself begins to evolve. Near the end comes the biggest surprise of all: the music arrives at a pause, and now Mozart writes out an impressive cadenza for the pianist, as if this movement were the finale of a piano concerto. What had been a gentle piano sonata suddenly erupts into powerful keyboard virtuosity, full of hammered chords and blazing runs before the excitement subsides and the cadenza makes its way to a delicate close—we almost expect to hear the sound of an orchestra rejoining the piano at this point. Mozart rounds matters off with one more infinitely graceful evolution of his rondo theme.

### Fantasy in F Minor, D.940

#### FRANZ SCHUBERT

(1797–1828)

The *Fantasy in F Minor*, originally composed for piano four-hands, comes from the miraculous final year of Schubert's brief life. In early nineteenth-century Vienna there was a growing market for music that could be played in the home, where there might be only one piano but several pianists, usually amateur musicians. Much of Schubert's four-hand piano music was intended for just such “home” performers, but the *Fantasy in F Minor* demands first-class performers and contains some of the most wrenching and focused music Schubert ever wrote. Schubert scholar John Reed has gone so far as to call it “a work which in its structural organisation, economy of form, and emotional depth represents his art at its peak.”

The title “fantasia” suggests a certain looseness of form, but the *Fantasy in F Minor* is extraordinary for its conciseness. Lasting barely a quarter of an hour, it is in one continuous flow of music that breaks into four clear movements. The beginning—*Allegretto molto moderato*—is haunting. Over murmuring ac-



companiment, the higher voice lays out the wistful first theme. Schubert repeats this theme continually—the effect is almost hypnotic—and suddenly the music has slipped effortlessly from F minor into F major. The second subject, based on dotted rhythms, is treated at length before the music drives directly into the powerful *Largo*, which is given an almost baroque luxuriance by its trills and double (and triple) dotting. This in turn moves directly into the *Allegro vivace*, a sparkling scherzo that feels like a very fast waltz. The writing here goes so high that much of this section is in the bell-like upper register of the piano. The final section (Schubert marks it simply *Tempo I*) brings back music from the very beginning, but quickly the wistful opening melody is jostled aside by a vigorous fugue. On tremendous chords and contrapuntal complexity, the *Fantasy* drives to its climax, only to fall away to the quiet close.

The *Fantasy in F Minor* is heard at this concert in an arrangement for solo piano made by the Ukrainian pianist **Maria Grindberg (1908–1978)**.

## **Chaconne from the Partita No. 2 in D Minor for Unaccompanied Violin, BWV 1004**

**JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH**  
(1685–1750)

The magnificent *Chaconne* that concludes the *Partita No. 2 for Unaccompanied Violin* is among the most intense music Bach ever wrote, and it has worked its spell on musicians everywhere over

the last two and a half centuries. The violin is a linear instrument, and the full harmonic textures implied in the original seem to cry out for performances that can project these more satisfactorily than can the violin. Brahms, who transcribed the *Chaconne* for left hand, was almost beside himself with admiration for this music; to Clara Schumann he wrote: “If I could picture myself writing, or even conceiving such a piece, I am certain that the extreme excitement and emotional tension would have driven me mad.”

**Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924)**, who felt a similar excitement about the *Chaconne*, made this transcription some years after Brahms’ and first performed it at a concert in Boston in 1893. This was a period when Busoni was making piano transcriptions of Bach’s organ music, and at least one scholar has suggested that Busoni conceived of the *Chaconne* as organ music (rather than violin music) and then—with that sonority in mind—proceeded to make a transcription for piano that would project an organ-like richness of sound.

A chaconne is one of the most disciplined forms in music: it is built on a ground bass in triple meter over which a melodic line is repeated and varied. Here the four-bar ground bass repeats 64 times during the quarter-hour span of the *Chaconne* and over it Bach spins out gloriously varied music, all the while keeping these variations firmly anchored on the ground bass. At the center section Bach moves into D major, and here the music relaxes a little, content to sing happily for a while. After the calm nobility of this interlude, the quiet return of D minor sounds almost disconsolate. Bach drives the *Chaconne* to a great climax and a restatement of the ground melody at the close.

—Program notes by Eric Bromberger