

# LINCOLN CENTER'S 2017/18 GREAT PERFORMERS

The Program

**Sunday, May 13, 2018, at 11:00 am**

*Sunday Morning Coffee Concerts*

**Christina and Michelle Naughton,**  
*Pianos*

RAVEL ***Ma mère l'oye* ("Mother Goose Suite") for piano four hands (1908–10)**

- I. Pavane de la Belle au Bois Dormant
- II. Petit poucet
- III. Laideronnette, Impératrice des Pagodes
- IV. Les entretiens de la Belle et de la Bête
- V. Le Jardin Féérique

JOHN ADAMS ***Roll Over Beethoven* (2014)**

Allegro molto  
Andantino

CHOPIN ***Rondo in C major for Two Pianos* (1828)**

LUTOSŁAWSKI ***Variations on a Theme by Paganini* (1941)**

*This program is approximately one hour long and will be performed without intermission.*

*Please join the artists for a cup of coffee following the performance.*

*Please make certain all your electronic devices are switched off.*

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Refreshments provided by Zabar's and zabars.com

**This performance is made possible in part by the Josie Robertson Fund for Lincoln Center.**

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*Steinway Piano*  
Walter Reade Theater

## Great Performers

Support is provided by Rita E. and Gustave M. Hauser, Audrey Love Charitable Foundation, Great Performers Circle, Chairman's Council, and Friends of Lincoln Center.

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Endowment support is also provided by UBS.

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### UPCOMING GREAT PERFORMERS EVENT:

*Saturday, May 19 at 7:30 pm in Alice Tully Hall*

**Freiburg Baroque Orchestra**

**Kristian Bezuidenhout**, fortepiano and director

HAYDN: Symphony No. 74 in E-flat major

MOZART: Piano Concerto No. 17 in G major

JOHANN CHRISTIAN BACH: Symphony in G minor

MOZART: Piano Concerto No. 9 in E-flat major ("Jeunehomme")

For tickets, call (212) 721-6500 or visit [LCGreatPerformers.org](http://LCGreatPerformers.org). Call the Lincoln Center Info Request Line at (212) 875-5766 to learn about program cancellations or to request a Great Performers brochure.

**Visit [LCGreatPerformers.org](http://LCGreatPerformers.org) for information on the 2018/19 season of Great Performers.**

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*We would like to remind you that the sound of coughing and rustling paper might distract the performers and your fellow audience members.*

*In consideration of the performing artists and members of the audience, those who must leave before the end of the performance are asked to do so between pieces. The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not allowed in the building.*

By Kathryn L. Libin

***Ma mère l'oye* ("Mother Goose Suite") for piano four hands (1908–10)**

MAURICE RAVEL

*Born March 7, 1875, in Ciboure, France*

*Died December 28, 1937, in Paris*

*Approximate length: 15 minutes*

Maurice Ravel entered the Paris Conservatory at age 14 and, while still a young man, established a considerable reputation at the Société de Musique for innovative works such as *Jeux d'eaux* and the formidable String Quartet. His failure to win the conservatory's coveted Prix de Rome, after five attempts between 1900 and 1905, was considered scandalous, but despite this rocky beginning, Ravel would become a leading member of the Parisian musical establishment and one of Europe's foremost composers. Though not a virtuoso pianist himself, he composed some of the most challenging and colorful piano music of the 20th century, as well as some of the most delicate and expressive. He was devoted to children, and numbered among his close companions the brother and sister Jean and Mimi Godebski. In 1910, when they were seven and six years old, Ravel wrote a suite of pieces for them that was meant to stir their imaginations and compel them to the piano. Choosing five of their favorite fairy tales, Ravel set evocative moments from each one in music for four hands, in some cases even supplying the relevant quotation at the top of the page.

The suite opens with two tales, "Sleeping Beauty" and "Tom Thumb," by the 17th-century French folklorist Charles Perrault. The first piece is a tiny, antique *pavane* only 20 bars long and perfectly innocent in its expression. The circling scale figures of the second piece depict Tom Thumb painstakingly retracing his steps via a trail of bread crumbs, only to find that the birds have eaten them all and he is lost once more. Pentatonic scales and gong effects evoke the Orient in *Laideronnette*, or "Little Ugly Girl, Empress of Pagodas," as she sits in her bath, surrounded by pagodas that function as handmaids; they also sing and play instruments, including the orbos made of hazelnut shells, and viols fashioned from almond shells. "The Conversations of Beauty and the Beast" portray *la Belle's* recognition that *la Bête* has a good heart and is not a monster—her declaration, "you will not die, you will live to be my spouse!" and ultimately his transformation into a prince "more beautiful than Love." Here Ravel depicts the unlikely pair by juxtaposing a graceful waltz melody against a growling bass line. The final piece illustrates the enchanted realm of the "Fairy Garden," with artfully rolled chords and a spray of brilliant *glissandi* at the close.

***Roll Over Beethoven* (2014)**

JOHN ADAMS

*Born February 15, 1947, in Worcester, Massachusetts*

*Approximate length: 19 minutes*

American composer John Adams began to write music at an early age, and as a student at Harvard in the 1960s, conducted the Bach Society Orchestra and performed as a clarinetist. He taught for 12 years at the San Francisco Conservatory, where he worked in an electronic music studio and directed the New Music Ensemble. His exposure there to minimalist compositions by Terry Riley, Steve Reich, and Philip Glass exerted a profound impact on his own development as a composer, although he prefers to characterize his work as “post-minimalist.” The works that most established him in the public mind as a significant American composer were two operas on contemporary historical narratives: *Nixon in China* (1987) and the controversial *Death of Klinghoffer* (1991). In 2003 Adams won the Pulitzer Prize for his 9/11 commemoration *On the Transmigration of Souls* (2002), a large choral and orchestral work commissioned by the New York Philharmonic and Lincoln Center’s Great Performers. Along with his operas, Adams has also composed an important body of orchestral music, as well as chamber music for string quartet and other small ensembles.

In 2012 Adams wrote a concerto for string quartet and orchestra, *Absolute Jest*, which derived its motivic essence from scherzo themes in two of Beethoven’s late string quartets. He continued this dialogue with Beethoven in his Second Quartet (2014), and its arrangement for two pianos, *Roll Over Beethoven*. The piano duet, whose title playfully evokes Chuck Berry’s 1956 rock-and-roll challenge to the musical “establishment,” received its premiere in 2016 by Christina and Michelle Naughton at New York’s Greene Space. Adams saturates the opening section of *Roll Over Beethoven* with a thematic fragment, or “fractal,” from the scherzo of Beethoven’s late piano sonata in A-flat major, Op. 110. This swift, pulsing movement employs the fragment to articulate the structure, with each new iteration generating changes in harmony and texture. The *Andantino* begins in lyrical style with the pensive melody from the opening of Op. 110; but the *energico* section, based on a fragment from the “Diabelli” Variations, uses Beethoven’s chromatic harmonies and strong *sforzando* accents to build exhilarating momentum. In discussing Beethoven’s influence, Adams has stated, “We have music that we love so much that we kind of want to get under the skin of that composer. For me, taking not so much melodies but just little harmonic fragments, like fractals, from Beethoven and putting them through the black box of my own musical personality was a real stimulation to my invention.”

**Rondo in C major for Two Pianos, Op. 73 (1828)**

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

*Born March 1, 1810, in Zelazowa Wola, Poland*

*Died October 17, 1849, in Paris*

*Approximate length: 10 minutes*

Frédéric Chopin was, along with his friend and rival Franz Liszt, the most innovative and influential writer of piano music of his time. A brilliant player who worked out his ideas through improvisation at the keyboard, Chopin masterfully exploited subtle gradations of tone, and was especially noted for his soft playing; he also used the responsive action of the piano to advantage in his figuration, whether powerful arpeggios or shimmering filigree. Over the course of his career, he cultivated genres that explored various aspects of pianism and expression in richest detail, from the extraordinary figuration patterns of the etudes, the long-breathed *cantilena* of the nocturnes, to the vivid dance rhythms of the waltzes and mazurkas.

The rondo, originally an 18th-century genre with repeating refrain and contrasting episodes, was usually found as a finale movement in sonatas and symphonies, though composers such as C.P.E. Bach, Mozart, and the young Beethoven wrote independent piano rondos. During Chopin's student days in Warsaw, the rondo was becoming a fashionable showcase vehicle for virtuosos; he composed four free-standing rondos for solo piano. Two of Chopin's rondos, including his Op. 1, date from the early years of his career and appeared in print in 1825 and 1828. Chopin completed a third rondo, in C major, in 1828 and almost immediately arranged it for two pianos. He spent that summer on holiday in Sanniki, a country district west of Warsaw, and wrote to a friend that he tried out the new two-piano arrangement there with pianist Maurycy Ernemann and it "went fairly well." But within a few months he would refer to the rondo as "that orphan child," and ultimately choose not to publish; it appeared as Op. 73 only after his death. The rondo refrain, which emerges after an impressive introduction, is the light, sparkling bravura type beloved by Romantic audiences. The piece unfolds in a rhapsodic way, with sudden harmonic ventures and cascades of figuration. Yet it is punctuated by a haunting little recurring theme, heard first in A minor and later in E minor, that provides poignant interludes amid the otherwise flamboyant display.

**Variations on a Theme by Paganini (1941)**

WITOLD LUTOSŁAWSKI

*Born January 25, 1913 in Warsaw, Poland*

*Died February 9, 1994 in Warsaw*

*Approximate length: 5 minutes*

Witold Lutoslawski was born near Warsaw during the turbulence of the First World War, and spent his earliest years with his family as exiles in Russia. But

after the war they returned and he began his education in Warsaw, studying violin, piano, and composition and in 1937 earning a diploma at the Warsaw Conservatory. As a young man of 24, he intended to continue his studies in Paris, but the outbreak of a new war frustrated those plans. Lutosławski served as a radio operator at army headquarters in Kraków before his capture by the Germans; when he managed to escape, he joined his family in occupied Warsaw. He supported himself and his family by working as a pianist in local cafés. With fellow pianist Andrzej Panufnik he formed the Lutosławski-Panufnik duo, performing primarily transcriptions of beloved classical and popular music. The piano duo became a favorite act at the Café Aria and offered a repertoire of nearly 200 pieces, arranging Bach, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, and other composers as well as jazz tunes. Tragically this repertoire, with the sole exception of the 1941 *Variations on a Theme of Paganini*, perished during the Warsaw Uprising.

Niccolò Paganini, undoubtedly the most famous violinist of his day, influenced generations of violinists and left a sizeable body of compositions, among which the 24 Caprices for solo violin, Op. 1 (1817), is by far the best known work. The most celebrated Caprice is the 24th, a theme in A minor with 11 variations and a finale. It is a compendium of daunting challenges designed for the elite violinist, and has provided many composers from Liszt and Brahms into the present day with a platform for their own inspiration. Lutosławski essentially transcribed Paganini's theme and variations, leaving intact its basic structure and translating the bravura violin technique into richly idiomatic and difficult keyboard writing. Though the *Variations* maintain a tonal framework, Lutosławski intensifies the original A-minor harmonies with chromaticism and even polytonal sections. Over 35 years after the Lutosławski-Panufnik duo dazzled their café audiences with this work in Warsaw, the composer produced a new version of the *Variations* for orchestra and solo piano that he dedicated to Polish pianist Felicja Blumental, who gave its premiere in 1979.

*Musicologist Kathryn L. Libin teaches music history and theory at Vassar College.*

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LISA-WARE MAZZUCCO

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### **Christina and Michelle Naughton**

Hailed for their artistry and technical mastery, Christina and Michelle Naughton have captivated audiences throughout the globe with the unity created by their mystical musical communication. Highlights of their 2017–18 season include recital appearances at the La Jolla Music Society and Ravinia Festival, the duo’s Lincoln Center debut, as well as appearances at the Gilmore Keyboard Festival, Rockefeller Evening Concerts, Purdue Convocations, Portland Piano International, Society of the Four Arts, Sharon Lynne Wilson Center, Virginia Arts Festival, and the National Gallery. Orchestral season highlights include performances with the Detroit, St. Louis, San Diego, Midland, and Puerto Rico symphonies. The duo will also be seen in recital and orchestral engagements throughout New Zealand, Brazil, Belgium, and Spain.

In 2016 the Naughtons released their debut record, *Visions*, on Warner Classics, featuring the music of Messiaen, Bach, and John Adams. The album received much critical acclaim and was chosen as an Editor’s Choice in *Gramophone* magazine.

Born in Princeton, New Jersey to parents of European and Chinese descent, Christina and Michelle are graduates of The Juilliard School and the Curtis Institute of Music, where they were each awarded the Festsorazzi Prize. They are Steinway Artists and currently reside in New York City.

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### **Lincoln Center’s Great Performers**

Initiated in 1965, Lincoln Center’s Great Performers series offers classical and contemporary music performances from the world’s outstanding symphony orchestras, vocalists, chamber ensembles, and recitalists. One of the most significant music presentation series in the world, Great Performers runs from October through June with offerings in Lincoln Center’s David Geffen Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Walter Reade Theater, and

other performance spaces around New York City. From symphonic masterworks, lieder recitals, and Sunday morning coffee concerts to films and groundbreaking productions specially commissioned by Lincoln Center, Great Performers offers a rich spectrum of programming throughout the season.

## **Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.**

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Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) serves three primary roles: presenter of artistic programming, national leader in arts and education and community relations, and manager of the Lincoln Center campus. A presenter of more than 3,000 free and ticketed events, performances, tours, and educational activities annually, LCPA offers 15 programs, series, and festivals including American Songbook, Great Performers, Lincoln Center Out of Doors, Midsummer Night Swing, the Mostly Mozart Festival, and the White Light Festival, as well as the Emmy Award-winning *Live From Lincoln Center*, which airs nationally on PBS. As manager of the Lincoln Center campus, LCPA provides support and services for the Lincoln Center complex and the 11 resident organizations. In addition, LCPA led a \$1.2 billion campus renovation, completed in October 2012.

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