



# MARKHAM CONTEMPORARY MUSIC FESTIVAL

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2026 – 2027  
CONCERT SEASON

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FRIDAY,  
OCTOBER 9, 2026  
CORNELL RECITAL HALL

# KINDRED SPIRITS ORCHESTRA

Kristian Alexander | Music Director



## ELEGANCE *and* IMAGINATION

SATURDAY  
OCTOBER 17, 2026  
8 P.M.

**RAVEL**

*Ma mère l'Oye*

**MOZART**

*Concerto for flute, harp  
and orchestra*

**FRANCK**

*Symphony in D minor*

**Kristian Alexander** | conductor

**Kelly Zimba Lukić** | flutist

**Andrew Chan** | harpist

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2026 - 2027 season

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## AN EVENING OF MUSICAL BRILLIANCE

Friday, October 9, 2026 at 8 p.m.  
Cornell Recital Hall  
3201 Bur Oak Ave., Markham

D. Shostakovich, Five pieces for 2 violins and piano

Theodora Chung, violin  
Alicia Zhu, violin  
Ivy He, piano

F. Liszt, Rigoletto Paraphrase  
F. Chopin, Ballade No. 1 in G minor

Tiffany Yuting Feng, piano

*This programme is approximately 60 minutes long without intermission.*

## Dmitri Shostakovich — *5 Pieces for Two Violins and Piano*



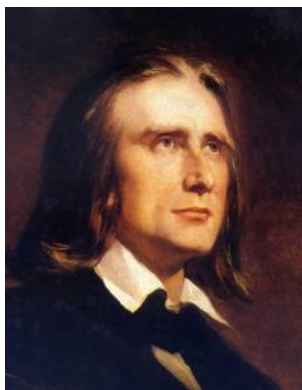
Although often associated with the monumental symphonies and string quartets that defined his mature career, Dmitri Shostakovich also possessed a remarkable gift for intimate, characterful music. The *Five Pieces for Two Violins and Piano* brings together five short movements that reveal a more playful and lyrical side of the composer.

The work is an arrangement, made by Lev Atovmyan, of music drawn from several of Shostakovich's earlier compositions. Each piece has its own distinctive character,

moving from graceful lyricism to wit, melancholy and energetic dance. The intimate scoring allows the two violins to converse almost like characters in a theatrical scene, while the piano provides both harmonic foundation and rhythmic momentum.

The music bears many of Shostakovich's characteristic fingerprints: clear melodic lines, unexpected harmonic turns, sharply defined rhythms and an ability to shift suddenly between humor and poignancy. What might initially sound simple and approachable often contains a subtle ambiguity beneath the surface. In these miniatures, Shostakovich demonstrates his extraordinary ability to say something memorable with very few notes.

## Franz Liszt — *Rigoletto Paraphrase, S. 434*

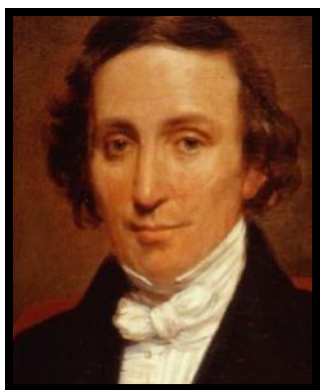


Franz Liszt transformed the piano recital in the nineteenth century, expanding the instrument's possibilities while bringing the great operatic repertoire into the concert hall. His *Rigoletto Paraphrase* is a brilliant example of this tradition. Written in 1851 and based on Giuseppe Verdi's opera *Rigoletto*, the paraphrase takes some of the opera's most recognizable material and reimagines it for solo piano. At its centre is the famous quartet from Act III, "*Bella figlia dell'amore*," in which four characters sing simultaneously, each expressing a different

emotion and perspective. Liszt translates this extraordinary ensemble onto a single instrument. Melodic lines are layered, ornamented and transformed, while the pianist is required to suggest the contrasting voices of the operatic characters. The result is not simply a transcription of Verdi, but a virtuosic re-creation of the drama at the keyboard.

The work moves between lyrical elegance and dazzling technical brilliance, culminating in a spectacular display of pianistic virtuosity. Liszt's paraphrase captures both the theatrical excitement of *Rigoletto* and the sheer expressive and technical possibilities of the nineteenth-century piano.

### Fryderyk Chopin — *Ballade No. 1 in G minor, Op. 23*



Chopin's First Ballade is among the most celebrated works in the piano repertoire—and one of the most enigmatic. Composed in the late 1830s, during Chopin's years in Paris, it was published in 1836 and dedicated to Baron Nathaniel von Stockhausen. The title *Ballade* was unusual for an instrumental work. Traditionally associated with narrative poetry and song, the term suggests a story without actually telling us what that story is. Chopin never provided a program for the piece, leaving its dramatic trajectory open to the imagination of each performer and listener.

The work begins with a brief, declamatory introduction before unfolding into a succession of contrasting ideas. A lyrical first theme is followed by a more animated second subject, and the music continually develops, transforms and intensifies these materials. Moments of extraordinary tenderness are interrupted by passages of agitation, virtuosity and mounting dramatic tension. Near the end, the music seems to gather everything into a single unstoppable surge. The final *Presto con fuoco* erupts with extraordinary force, bringing the Ballade to one of the most exhilarating conclusions in the piano literature.

The First Ballade is remarkable not merely for its technical demands, but for its sense of narrative. Without words or explicit program, Chopin creates the impression of a complete dramatic journey—one in which lyricism, conflict, memory and passion are bound together in a single, intensely personal musical voice.

## THEODORA CHUNG | Violinist

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Theodora Chung began studying the violin at the age of five and is currently pursuing a Pre-Collegiate Diploma in Violin under the tutelage of Wilfredo Deglans at the Eastman Music School of the University of Rochester, New York, where she holds a merit scholarship. She is also working toward the Level 10 Certificate in Violin Performance of the Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM). Between 2023 and 2025, Theodora earned three National and Regional Gold Medals from the RCM for achieving the highest examination marks

in Canada and Ontario. She has received numerous prizes at music festivals and competitions. Among her notable achievements are the Grand Final Prize at the 2024 Pickering Rotary Music Festival and the Grand Prize at the 2023 CCC International Music Festival. She was also awarded the Bach Trophy, the Sonata Trophy, and the Canadian Composer Trophy. Theodora won first place in the 2023 International Music Festival and Competition (IMFC) Concerto Competition and was the Ontario Music Festivals Association (OMFA) Provincial Champion in the String Popular Class for four consecutive years (2023–2026). She also earned second place at the Ontario Provincial Finals in both the Classical Violin Class and the Popular Piano Class. In addition, Theodora received First Prize in the American Protégé International Piano and Strings Competition, which led to her Carnegie Hall debut at the age of nine.

## ALICIA ZHU | Violinist

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Alicia Zhu began her violin studies at the age of five under the guidance of Mrs. Janet Wilchfort. Demonstrating remarkable musical talent from an early age, she has received numerous awards and first-place prizes at major music competitions and festivals, including the Ontario Music Festivals Association (OMFA), Unionville Music Competition, International Music Festival Competition (IMFC), and Toronto Kiwanis

Music Festival, among others. Alicia currently studies with Dr. Conrad Chow and is a student in the Arts Program at Unionville High School. In addition to violin, she has been exploring the viola, opening new opportunities to participate in chamber music and orchestral ensembles. Outside of music, Alicia enjoys drawing and building puzzles. She is passionate about continuing to grow as a young musician and sharing her love of music through performance.

## TIFFANY WENG | Pianist

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Tiffany Yuting Feng began studying piano at the age of five and violin at the age of six. She currently studies piano with Professor Langning Liu and is a member of The Phil and Eli Taylor Performance Academy. Tiffany has received numerous awards and distinctions in national and international competitions. Her recent achievements include being a Top 5 finalist in the 2026 TIPC Young Artist Category, Playoffs Champion at the 2026 Canada OMFA Provincial Finals, First Prize at the 2026 Canadian Music Competition Ontario Provincial Round, and a finalist in the 2026

Vancouver Piano Concerto Competition. She also received First Prize in the New York Division of the San Francisco Piano Competition, First Prize at the 2026 North York Music Festival, First Prize in the Piano Concerto category at the 2025 International Music Festival Competition (IMFC), Third Prize in the Piano Concerto category at the Cleveland YAPS Competition, and a Gold Prize at the 2025 Steinway Piano Competition.



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