

Jeffrey Chang presents...

# Bach and more!

A short piano recital



Sun Oct. 23 @ 2:30pm  
Northwest Building  
2nd floor stairwell

## Program

*Minuet* from Cello Suite No. 1 in G major .....Bach (BWV 1007)

*Prelude* and *Fugue* in c minor from WTC 1..... Bach (BWV 847)

French Suite No. 2 in c minor.....Bach (BWV 813)

*Allemande – Courante – Sarabande – Air – Menuet – Gigue*

~ Intermission ~

*Prelude* in b minor, Op. 32 No. 10.....Rachmaninoff

*Prélude* and *Menuet*, from *Le Tombeau de Couperin*..... Ravel

*Fugue* from Violin Sonata No. 1 in g minor .....Bach (BWV 1001)

~ Reception ~

Aux Champs-Élysées, aux Champs-Élysées,  
Au soleil, sous la pluie, à midi, ou à minuit,  
Il y a tout ce que vous voulez aux Champs-Élysées!

## Piece Descriptions

*Minuet from Cello Suite No. 1 in G major* .....Bach (BWV 1007)

A cute minuet in ABA form: first it's happy (A), and then it gets a little troubled (B), but then it forgets and it's carefree again (A). Yes, I'm playing it on the melodica. No, you can't stop me. It's more fun this way. I don't think Bach would mind — after all, he's dead.

*Prelude and Fugue in c minor from WTC 1* .....Bach (BWV 847)

One thing that's sweet about Bach is that you can play it however you want. Some people might like it and some people might hate it but nobody can say you're wrong. This prelude is kind of intense (yes Tim, it's a famous prelude), but I feel like its accompanying fugue is lighter and more playful. See if you can hear the three voices as they take turns playing the main melody!

*French Suite No. 2 in c minor* .....Bach (BWV 813)

A collection of dances. Each dance has its own character and tells its own story. As you listen, immerse yourself in the varying moods and emotional worlds, and let your imagination run free...

*Allemande* — Sad, hopeful, peaceful, or just beautiful...who knows? See what you think.

*Courante* — A vigorous fast dance in three with some funky rhythms near the end.

*Sarabande* — This one is slow, passionate, and yearning. What it yearns for, nobody knows.

*Air* — A little funky and a little jumpy. It's hard to describe. But I like it.

*Menuet* — I played this minuet when I was 7 years old! I can play it a bit better now.

*Gigue* — I played this for the first time last week, so hopefully I don't screw it up today.

*Prelude in b minor, Op. 32 No. 10* .....Rachmaninoff

Here's a moody, late Romantic prelude. It starts off in a golden and wistful time from long ago. Then a grand, fiery melody emerges with a relentless barrage of pulsating triplets, inescapably driving forward, on and on and on until everything erupts in a thunderous climax. Once the smoke clears we find ourselves in that golden memory again, wondering what was real and what was imagined.

*Prélude and Menuet, from Le Tombeau de Couperin* .....Ravel

Surreal, ethereal, and French. Impressionist harmonies flirt in and out of existence. A soundscape from an entirely different dimension, unlike any reality you or I have ever known. The *Prélude* is built off a never-ending stream of fast sixteenth notes, constantly splashing and gurgling and chasing one impossible thought after another. The *Menuet* is tender and beautiful. Today I'm only playing two pieces out of a set of six, each of which is dedicated to the memory of a friend of Ravel who died fighting in the first world war.

*Fugue from Violin Sonata No. 1 in g minor* .....Bach (BWV 1001)

This is my attempt at performing serious work of classical music on a toy instrument. The fugue has four separate voices, each riffing off the same four-note motif. From time to time one of the voices breaks off into a long string of fast notes and there's nowhere for me to breathe! The music is angsty and gets rather vigorous, but from time to time it has some quiet moments, like a prayer — as Ray Chen puts it, you have to pretend you're in a grand cathedral playing this sublime stuff.

## Notes

A few years ago I got obsessed with Bach. At first I thought it was just a phase — the way a lot of teenagers go through an emo phase — but I never really snapped out of it. In fact my obsession has only gotten worse over time. So why? What's so special about Bach? You could point to a few reasons — sick melodies, swinging grooves, crazy harmonies — but for me, one thing stands out: his music is at once analytical and emotional. On the one hand, it's dry, crisp, theoretical. Logical. Precisely and meticulously constructed. But on the other hand, it is sublimely expressive — within the notes lies the whole range of human emotions, from wrenching sorrow to blissful nostalgia, from utter derangement to soft regret, and maybe even higher levels of consciousness, who knows (Bach was a deeply religious man after all). At once algebraic and transcendent — a contradiction!

I guess life itself is full of contradictions and complexities: happiness, sadness, hope, despair, and the nagging feeling that none of it will have mattered after we're gone. For me, especially when I get too busy, the days and the nights start to meld together; time dulls and each moment loses its charm. I'm sure you feel the same way from time to time too. But music is not like that. It only exists in the moment (yeah it's really weird if you think about it). So while you're here today, why not take a step back to savor each moment and cherish being alive? You'll never be as young as you are right now (again it's trippy if you think about it too much...thanks Bridget).

It means a lot to me that you've taken time out of your day to come. Thank you for being here. Please enjoy the music in this gorgeous building. We are so lucky to be here. There will be free food afterwards!

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to Jerry, my roommate, for preparing the food for the reception; to Berk for setting up the venue; to Misha G. for running the livestream; to my close friends for helping me through rough times; to my labmates for dealing with my nonsense every day; and to my parents for their unwavering support and care.

## Biography

Jeffrey Chang, 23, is a Silicon Valley native who has lived in Cambridge for the past two years. He began playing the piano since age 6, the French horn since age 12, and the melodica since age 16. In college he was a proud member of the *Stanford Collaborative Orchestra* (SCOr), a conductorless chamber orchestra, and *Casual Business*, a jazz combo. In 2019, SCOr premiered his composition, *Rhapsody on a Meme*, inspired by the Mii channel theme song. In 2020, Jeffrey graduated from Stanford with a B.S. in physics. In 2021, Jeffrey did very little. In 2022, Jeffrey joined *Mutual (Beef)*, a jazz combo named after a meat wholesaler in South End. Currently, he is pursuing a PhD in physics at Harvard, co-advised by Michael Desai and Wesley Wong. He aims to develop new high-throughput assays for precise measurements of biomolecules. Jeffrey's piano teachers include Ms. Diane Kwan, Ms. Maggie Lee, and Dr. Frederick Weldy. He is grateful to them for their patient instruction.