

FORBES CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY®

School of Music

presents

the guest artist recital of

Liza Stepanova, *piano*

Tuesday, October 7, 2025

7 pm

Recital Hall



There will be one 15-minute intermission.

Program

Toccata Quinta sopra I pedali

Girolamo Frescobaldi

(1583-1643)

Arr. Bela Bartok

(1881-1945)

10 Variations on “Unser dummer Pöbel meint”
in G major, K. 455

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

(1756-1791)

(theme from the opera “The Pilgrims to Mecca” by Ch.W. Gluck)

*from this park to ocean (2025) Commissioned by
the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy
of Music for Liza Stepanova.*

Seo Yeon Soyoona Kim

(b.1988)

from *Das Jahr* (The Year)

Fanny Mendelssohn

January. A Dream

(1805-1847)

February. Scherzo

September. At the River

15-Minute Intermission

Piano Sonata No. 3 in B minor, Op. 58 (1921)

Frédéric Chopin

(1810-1849)

I. Allegro maestoso

II. Scherzo: Molto vivace

III. Largo

IV. Finale: Presto non tanto

Biography

LIZA STEPANOVA, Despy Karlas Professor in Piano, Piano Area Chair

Praised by *The New York Times* for her “thoughtful musicality” and “fleet-fingered panache,” Liza Stepanova is in demand as a soloist, collaborator, and educator. In 2025–2026, she performs and teaches at Brevard, Bowdoin, Songfest, and the UNCSA Summer Piano Intensive, as a guest artist at universities, including CU Boulder, James Madison, and Vanderbilt, and continues to tour with the Lysander Piano Trio at series nationwide, including Rockefeller Concerts in New York City and Music at Kohl Mansion in San Francisco.

Stepanova has performed extensively in Europe, most recently, as a soloist with the Southwest-German Philharmonic and in chamber music performances at the Berlin Museum of Musical Instruments, at the Copenhagen Music Festival, and in Belgrade’s Kolarac Hall. In the United States, she has appeared in Weill and Zankel Recital Halls at Carnegie; Alice Tully Hall, Merkin and Steinway halls in New York City; at the Kennedy Center and The Smithsonian in Washington, DC; and live on WQXR New York, WFMT Chicago, and WETA Washington. Stepanova was twice featured as a soloist with the Juilliard Orchestra led by James DePreist and Nicholas McGegan and was a top prizewinner at the Liszt-Garrison, Juilliard Concerto, Steinway, and Ettlingen competitions. As a soloist and chamber musician, she has been invited to international festivals at Castleton, La Jolla, Music@Menlo, Mostly Mozart, Copenhagen (Denmark), and Davos (Switzerland), where she had opportunities to collaborate with leading artists including violinist Cho-Liang Lin, violist James Dunham, clarinetist Charles Neidich, soprano Lucy Shelton, mezzo-soprano Susanne Mentzer and members of the Berlin Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, and the Atlanta Symphony. Deeply committed to new music, she has premiered works by Jennifer Higdon and Libby Larsen and worked with composers William Bolcom, Gabriela Lena Frank, and John Harbison.

Stepanova's most recent, second solo album "E Pluribus Unum" (Navona Records) celebrated contemporary American composers with an immigrant background. The CD, which features a commission and three world-premiere recordings, received universal acclaim with reviews in the top three British classical music journals: *Gramophone*, *BBC Music Magazine*, and *International Piano*, as well as *The Whole Note* in Canada and *Piano Magazine* in the US. The album was broadcast widely on national and international radio including "Album of the Week" on Canada's public radio, several plays in Australia, and across the US. Following the release, Stepanova was profiled as *Musical America Worldwide's* "New Artist of the Month," a distinction celebrating her body of work to-date. Stepanova's debut solo album "Tones & Colors: Music and Visual Art" (CAG Records, 2018), recorded in New York City with

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Grammy-winning producer Adam Abeshouse, brought together music from Bach to Ligeti that was inspired by visual art. This record was also praised in

international media and continues to be regularly played on American Public Media's *Performance Today*, including multiple features as a headliner.

As a member of the Lysander Piano Trio, Stepanova won the Concert Artists Guild International Competition and received top prizes at the Coleman and Fischhoff Chamber Music Competitions. The ensemble recently celebrated its tenth anniversary with a new album "Mirrors" (First Hand Records, UK) dedicated to works the group either commissioned or premiered, including a world-premiere recording of a work by Jennifer Higdon. Lysander has performed at all major venues in New York City including Carnegie Hall and David Geffen Hall as part of the Mostly Mozart Festival to enthusiastic reviews in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. Highlights of Lysander's recent tours include the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts; Purdue University's Convocations Series, Los Angeles' Clark Memorial Library at UCLA and the Da Camera Society; Chicago's Dame Myra Hess Concert series and Rockford Coronado Concerts; San Francisco's Music at Kohl Mansion; and Juneau Jazz and Classics (AK). Liza Stepanova studied art song collaboration with Wolfram Rieger in Berlin and was invited by the late Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau to perform in several of his master classes including the Hugo-Wolf-Tage festival in Austria.

Stepanova's UGA students have been invited to the Aspen, Bowdoin, Brevard, Chautauqua, and Salzburg Mozarteum summer programs and received scholarships to elite graduate programs. Recent student successes include top prizes at the national round of the MTNA Competition, Liszt-Ohio International Competition, GMTA, MTNA, Atlanta Music Club, and Atlanta Mozart Society competitions, and a finalist award at the Wideman International Piano Competition. Stepanova is committed to expanding educational and professional opportunities for her students. At UGA, she directs the biannual Chamber Music Athens festival and academy, featuring acclaimed international artists performing and teaching alongside UGA musicians. In 2024, she hosted and co-directed the American Liszt Society annual national festival. Stepanova received her DMA from The Juilliard School with a Richard F. French Award for outstanding doctoral work. Previously a graduate of the Hanns Eisler Academy in Berlin, Germany, she studied with Joseph Kalichstein, Seymour Lipkin, Jerome Lowenthal, and George Sava, and performed in master classes for Alfred Brendel, Daniel Barenboim, and András Schiff. Following teaching positions at The Juilliard School and Smith College, she joined the faculty at the University of Georgia, Hugh Hodgson School of Music in 2015 where she is now Despy Karlas Professor in Piano and Piano Area Chair.