

PIANO CITY ATHENS 2026

@ Deree – The American College of Greece

EVENING CONCERTS

Thursday, 14 May 2026 | 18.00-20.30

Friday, 15 May 2026 | 17.00-22.30

THURSDAY, 14 MAY 2026

18:00

Transcendence I
Piano Recital

Chris Yonas | piano

Program

F. Chopin (1810–1849)

Nocturne in C-sharp minor, Op. posth. (1830)
Ballade No. 1 in G minor, Op. 23 (1831–35)

F. Liszt (1811–1886)

Liebesträum No. 3 in A-flat major, S. 541/3 (1850)
Un Sospiro, S. 144/3 from *Trois Études de Concert* (1848)
Grandes Études de Paganini, No. 6 in A minor, S. 141/6 (1851)

F. Chopin (1810–1849)

Ballade No. 4 in F minor, Op. 52 (1842)

C. Debussy (1862–1918)

L'Isle joyeuse, L. 106 (1904)

Notes

This recital traces a path from Chopin's Romantic lyricism to Liszt's virtuosic brilliance and Debussy's luminous colours. Chopin's Nocturne and Ballade No. 1 introduce a world of poetic intimacy and dramatic narrative. The works by Liszt expand the expressive and technical possibilities of the piano, combining lyricism with dazzling virtuosity. Chopin's final Ballade deepens the Romantic intensity, while Debussy's playful "*L'Isle Joyeuse*" brings the program to a radiant and energetic close!

The piano emerges as an instrument of poetry, power, and imagination.

Bio

Chris Yonas is a distinguished Greek-Australian pianist and composer, known for his high-level pianistic performances and unique artistic identity. He began his studies at the "Musical Horizons" Conservatory, where he earned his *Soloist Diploma* with High Distinction and First Prize in 2016 studying with professor Betty Gaitanou-Barzouka.

He is a graduate of the *Hellenic-American Educational Foundation* with an *International Baccalaureate Diploma* and is holder of a *Bachelor of Arts (Honors)* and a *Bachelor in Music Performance* degrees from *Deree – The American College of Greece (ACG)* where he studied under the guidance of the internationally acclaimed pianist, Dimitri Toufexis. During his studies at Deree - ACG, he graduated *summa cum laude* and was awarded the *Deree Hood Award*, as well as the *Outstanding Graduate Award (Music)*, the *Artistic Achievement Award*, and the *International Honors Award* for his artistic achievements and interdisciplinary academic excellence.

His international education includes studies at the *University of Melbourne* in Australia, the *Mozarteum University* in Austria, and *Stanford University* in the USA, where he deepened his knowledge in interdisciplinary studies across philosophy and mathematics.

As a soloist, he has received distinctions in numerous national and international music competitions and has appeared on prestigious stages and cultural venues in Greece and abroad, including the *Athens Concert Hall (Megaron)*, the "*Parnassos*" *Literary Society*, the *Alternative Stage* of the *Greek National Opera*, the *Michael Cacoyannis Foundation*, the *Mozarteum University* in Austria, the *Victoria College of the Arts* in Melbourne, *Branner Hall* in San Francisco, and *Vårdklockan Church* on the island of Gotland, Sweden.

For the year 2025, in recognition of his distinguished artistic activity, he was honored by the *Academy of Athens* with the prestigious "*Eleni Tim. Mykoniou*" *Artistic Award* for piano performance.

THURSDAY, 14 MAY 2026

19:00

Feminine Resonances

(Music shaped by inspiration and dedication)

Stella Arabatzoglou | saxophone
Korina Samourkasidou | piano

Notes

This program explores dedication as a creative force in the repertoire for saxophone and piano. Bringing together works composed by women alongside pieces written in tribute to the performers, it traces a network of artistic relationships that shape musical language and expression.

The evocative landscapes of Paule Maurice and the clarity of concert writing represented by Clare Grundman frame a recital that moves between lyricism and virtuosity. Contemporary works dedicated to the performers further emphasize the living dimension of this repertoire, underscoring collaboration not only as interpretation but as origin.

Within this context, each composition becomes a portrait, sometimes intimate, sometimes radiant, revealing how admiration, artistic dialogue, and shared vision are transformed into sound. The recital thus unfolds as both performance and acknowledgment: a space where creation and dedication resonate together.

Bios

Stella Arabatzoglou teaches saxophone at the Athenaeum Conservatory, Kodály Conservatory and St Catherine's British School in Athens. She is principal saxophonist of the Athens Municipal Wind Orchestra and Artistic Director of the ATHENAEUM SAXOPHONE QUARTET, which she founded in 2004. Born in Rethymno, she studied at the Athenaeum Conservatory, graduating with highest honours and First Prize. She has collaborated with distinguished ensembles including the Rundfunk - Blasorchester Leipzig and the Athens State Orchestra. As a soloist and chamber

musician she has premiered works by contemporary Greek composers, many dedicated to her. She is actively engaged in concert and educational activities in Greece and internationally.

Korina Samourkasidou was born in Komotini, Greece, where she began her piano studies. She graduated with First Prize unanimously from the Macedonian Conservatory of Thessaloniki, studying with Nicholas Astrinidis. In 1985 she continued her studies in France, first at the Conservatoire de Strasbourg and then (1986–1995) at the École Normale de Musique de Paris with Jean Micault. In Paris, she also studied musicology at the Sorbonne, the Willems pedagogical method, and earned a degree in Choral Conducting.

In 1992, she gave the first performance in Greece of Olivier Messiaen's *Visions de l'Amen*, working on the piece under the guidance of the composer himself. She has appeared as a soloist with major orchestras and has given recitals across Europe and Egypt. Her performances include collaborations at the Athens Festival, as well as concerts with international ensembles such as the Berlin Symphony Orchestra and the Romanian Chamber Orchestra of Braşov. She has also made recordings in France and Sofia.

Alongside her performing career, she has taught at leading conservatories in Greece and served (2001–2011) as Director of the Protypo Music Center of Piraeus. She currently teaches at the Kodály Conservatory and continues to perform in Greece and abroad. In October 2025, she presented the world premiere of Zbigniew Preisner's *Healing Waves* in Syros, Greece.

THURSDAY, 14 MAY 2026

19:45

Making meaning, making music

Piano Recital

Manos Charalabopoulos | piano

Program

R. Schumann: Kreisleriana, Op. 16

Manos Charalabopoulos: Poemas de amor

C. Debussy: Prelude No. 5 (Book I)

Notes

April 1838 — Robert Schumann is twenty-eight, deeply in love and secretly engaged to Clara Wieck, the daughter of his former piano teacher, who fiercely opposes their relationship. Robert composes a new cycle of piano pieces — supposedly in just four days — mirroring his emotional alternation between "depression and rapture". He borrows the name Kreisleriana from E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Fantasiestücke*, in reference to the literary work's temperamental protagonist, Kapellmeister Kreisler.

December 1909 — Claude Debussy is forty-seven, living in Paris with his second wife Emma Bardac and their young daughter Chou-Chou, burdened by debt and a failing marriage. He has spent years wrestling free of Wagner's overwhelming influence, searching for a musical language that suggests rather than states, that opens doors and invites reflection. At the peak of his powers, he composes two dozen preludes for piano, each inscribed with a postscript but no title. The postscript for one of them may have been inspired by a scene depicted on the label of a wine bottle — "...les collines d'Anacapri..."

Summer 2018 — I am twenty-seven, living in Manchester, happily married and desperately trying to complete my PhD thesis portfolio. Creatively, I have been as dry as the desert for almost two years, having become saturated by the study of new music. I return to the piano — a source of musical comfort I have long shunned in my search for new possibilities — and ask myself: "If the piano is my voice, how do I recite a poem?"

Three pieces, three moments in time, three distinct ways of sowing meaning into sound through the agency of words. Schumann's title and letters codify a projection of the temperamental Romantic genius, keen to direct our reading toward the construction of a mythical identity.

Debussy, by contrast, aligns himself firmly with the suggestive aesthetic of fin-de-siècle Symbolism — opening doors, inviting associations. Both place the music before the words, even where the boundary between the two is not clear cut. My own work places words at the very centre: these are recitations of actual poems, delivered through the figurative voice of the piano. All meaning is derived directly from those poems, whose musical qualities are augmented while their verbal dimension is withheld—the space previously occupied by words, now yours to fill.

Indeed, meaning is made only partly on the encoding side. The cultural theorist Stuart Hall argued that the moment of decoding — the receiver's translation of a message into meaning — is just as determining as the moment of encoding. Sound becomes music no sooner than the listener sows meaning within it. Through the agency of our memory and imagination, music has the power to be whatever we need it to be: an anchor or a pair of wings, grounding body, mind and soul one moment and taking us on a journey the next. This is the gift of music — and in times as precarious as ours, it is one to be treasured.

I invite you today to make meaning with me—to make music.

Bio

Greek-British composer and pianist **Manos Charalabopoulos** has seen his works performed across Europe and South America by leading ensembles, including the BBC Singers, Hezarfen Ensemble, Bristol Ensemble and Athens Bridge Quartet. As a soloist, he has appeared at prestigious venues such as St Martin-in-the-Fields, Bridgewater Hall, and Megaron – The Athens Concert Hall. A recipient of the RPS Composition Prize and the Ivan Juritz Prize, his discography includes the album *Espelho Duplo*, featuring the piano music of André Luiz Machado. He is currently preparing his second album, which showcases his own original compositions for solo piano. He is an Assistant Professor at Deree-The American College of Greece.

FRIDAY, 15 MAY, 2026

17:00

Inspirations

Piano Recital

Stefanos Argyriou-Saragias | piano

Program

D. Scarlatti: Sonata in A minor K.54 L.241

M. Glinka/M. Balakirev: The lark

J. Brahms: Rhapsody no. 2 in G minor

F. Liszt: Funérailles

Bio

Stefanos Argyriou Saragias is a pianist and musician with a multifaceted artistic background, combining musical performance with broader theoretical and interdisciplinary education. He holds a Piano Diploma from the Attiko Conservatory of Athens, as well as degrees in music theory (harmony and counterpoint), and a Bachelor's degree from the Faculty of Science of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Department of Physics.

He continues his piano studies through masterclasses with Christina Panteli and is a senior student at the Ionian University, Department of Music Studies, specializing in Orchestral Conducting under the guidance of Miltos Logiadis.

His artistic activity spans solo performance, chamber music, accompaniment, and participation in complex stage productions. He has performed in various venues in Greece as well as in international events such as the Berlin Opera Academy, where he worked as a répétiteur on *The Magic Flute* by W. A. Mozart and also performed as a member of the orchestra in *Ariadne auf Naxos* by R. Strauss.



He has collaborated with choirs, musical ensembles, and theatrical productions as a pianist and accompanist, with experience that includes both classical repertoire and contemporary, interdisciplinary artistic approaches.

FRIDAY, 15 MAY, 2026

18:00

Transcendence II

Piano Recital

Chris Yonas | piano

Program

A Scriabin (1872–1915)

Prelude & Nocturne for the Left Hand, Op. 9

Fantasy in B minor, Op. 28

P. I. Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

Dumka, Op. 59

S. Rachmaninov (1873–1943)

Piano Sonata No. 2 in B-flat minor, Op. 36 (1913)

Notes

This recital brings together three seminal figures of Russian Romanticism: Tchaikovsky, Scriabin, & Rachmaninov.

Tracing a powerful arc within the Russian pianistic tradition, the journey begins with the inward, mystical lyricism of Scriabin's early works and culminates in the expansive vision of his *Fantasy*, Op. 28. It then moves through the expressive warmth and distinctive folk-inspired rhythms of Tchaikovsky's *Dumka*, before reaching the sweeping scale and dramatic intensity of Rachmaninov's monumental *Piano Sonata No. 2*.

Across these works, the piano becomes a vehicle for intimacy and color, ultimately unfolding into full symphonic grandeur.

Bio

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FRIDAY, 15 MAY, 2026

19:00

Understone

A session of free improvisation

Filippos Raskovits | piano

Bio and Notes

Filippos Raskovic is a composer and pianist based in Vilnius, originally from Athens. His work explores piano improvisation as a space where structure and spontaneity coexist, creating sonic worlds that feel both accidental and composed, familiar yet unexpected. He has self-released several solo piano albums, including *Gentle Presence* (2020), *Fleeting the Flootide Sea* (2024), and *Understone* (2025). He has performed at venues such as Fylkingen, State51 Studios, Flatterschafft Basel, Ausland, and Sapiegu Rumai. A founding member of the illucid trio with K. Jusinskas and G. Steponavičius, he also co-founded the KRAMA collective and festival in Athens.

Filippos Raskovic's music combines gesture, harmony, and repetitive motifs, drawing on free improvisation, jazz, and contemporary classical music. He weaves repetition and resonance into evolving forms where motifs appear, shift, dissolve, and return transformed, creating continuity without fixed composition. Each performance responds to the acoustic space, allowing the piano's timbre and the room's resonance to shape the unfolding direction of the music.

FRIDAY, 15 MAY, 2026

19:45

Echoes of Spain

Lefki Karpodini, Michael Brownlee Walker | piano

Program

M. Infante (1883-1958):

DANSES ANDALOUSES - Suite for two pianos

I. Ritmo

II. Sentimento

III. Gracia (El Vito)

E. Granados (1867-1916) • trans.: Ethel Bartlett & Rae Robertson:

QUEJAS Ó LA MAYA Y EL RUISEÑOR

The lover and the nightingale

(from the piano suite “Goyescas”)

I. Albeniz (1860-1909) • trans.: Enrique Granados

TRIANA

(from the piano suite “Ibèria”)

M. De Falla (1876-1946) • trans.: Aron Bubeniko

SIETE CANCIONES POPULARES ESPAÑOLAS

Seven Spanish Folk Songs

I. El paño moruno

II. Seguidilla murciana

III. Asturiana

- IV. Jota
- V. Nana
- VI. Canción
- VII. Polo

Two pianos are always exciting, especially if played by Lefki Karpodini and Michael Brownlee Walker. An evening full of challenges, which passed without anyone being aware of the difficulties, as the duo Karpodini-Walker was as always very well prepared and perfectly synchronized. • N. Dontas / Kathimerini Newspaper

Notes

A recital for two pianos that highlights the magic of the Spanish National School of the early 20th century. From the lyricism and nostalgic sensitivity of Granados, inspired by the poetic world of Goya, to the virtuosic brilliance and the vibrant, pulsating rhythms of Andalusia in Albéniz and Infante, the music unfolds with explosive colors and intense contrasts.

The folk melodies permeating the pages of de Falla are transformed into dramatic, seductive dialogues between the two pianos, full of tension and fire. A captivating journey where tradition meets virtuosity, rhythm becomes a heartbeat, and Spain resonates with power, passion, and profound emotion.

Bios

Michael Brownlee Walker was born in Zimbabwe and moved to England at the age of 19 to study piano with Leslie Howard in London, and then at the Royal Northern College of Music with Margaret Fingerhut. Since settling in Greece, Michael has performed at the Athens Megaron, at festivals in the Peloponnese, Samos and Syros, and was artistic director of the Paxos Festival in 2014. For over ten years he has collaborated in a successful piano duo with Lefki Karpodini. In addition to composing and arranging music for their piano duo, Michael has written songs that have been performed and recorded, including the anthem for the 75th anniversary of UNICEF in Greece (in 2022).

Lefki Karpodini has performed at prestigious venues and festivals (Wigmore Hall, Purcell Room, Meistersaal, Athens Megaron, Mecklenburg Vorpommern, Banff, Heraklion Piano Festival, Aegina etc.) across Europe, Israel, and Canada. She has collaborated with leading musicians, ensembles and orchestras to critical acclaim and has recorded for BBC Radio 3, Deutscher Musikrat and Irida Music.

A distinction graduate of the Athens Conservatoire and an IKY scholar, she completed postgraduate studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the Ensemble Modern Academy. A prize-winner in international and national competitions, she currently teaches at the Athenaeum Conservatoire and Moraitis School, and will be guest professor at the international summer piano course Music at Chateau d’Aix (France) in 2026. www.lefkikarpodini.com

FRIDAY, 15 MAY, 2026

20:30

Moods in Modern Lines for Two

Christine Tokatlian, Elena Christodoulou | piano

Program

D. Shostakovich: Concertino for two pianos

Arutiunian-Babadjanian: Armenian Rhapsody

Spiros Mazis: Silence in Three Movements

- I. Silence in Motion
- II. Silence Within
- III. Silence Breaking

R. R. Benett: Four Piece Suite – Divertimento

- I. Samba Triste
- II. Country Blues
- III. Ragtime Waltz
- IV. Finale

P. Glass: Four movements for Two Pianos

Notes

This program brings together works that explore the expressive and textural possibilities of paired keyboards across cultures and generations. From the sparkling wit and youthful energy of Shostakovich to the folk-infused brilliance of Arutiunian and Babadjanian, the first half celebrates

national identity and rhythmic vitality. The cosmopolitan voice of Richard Rodney Bennett expands this dialogue, blending clarity of form with modern harmonic language and rhythmic sophistication. Spiros Mazis' contemporary *Silence in Three Movements*, turns the program inward, exploring resonance, space, and the poetic tension between sound and stillness. Finally, *Four Movements for Two Pianos* by Philip Glass channels repetition and pulse into a mesmerizing, contemporary soundscape.

Dmitri Shostakovich – Concertino (1953): Composed for his teenage son Maxim, the *Concertino for Two Pianos* reveals a lighter, more playful side of Shostakovich. Cast in a single movement with contrasting sections, the work opens with bright, energetic themes and lively exchanges between the two pianists. A more lyrical middle section offers warmth and expressive depth before the spirited opening material returns.

Alexander Arutiunian & Arno Babadjanian – Armenian Rhapsody (1950): The *Armenian Rhapsody* is a vibrant celebration of Armenian musical heritage. The work blends virtuosic brilliance with the rich colors and rhythms of Armenian folk music. Driving dance rhythms, bold harmonies, and sweeping lyrical passages evoke both festive energy and heartfelt song.

Spiros Mazis - Silence in Three Movements, Op. 172 (2025): In *Silence in Three Movements*, Greek composer Spiros Mazis explores silence not as absence, but as a living presence within sound. The work unfolds through three contrasting yet interconnected movements, where resonance, space, and subtle shifts of texture shape the musical narrative. The two pianos function both independently and as a unified instrument, creating layers of echo, tension, and reflection. Moments of stillness heighten the listener's awareness of color and gesture, inviting a contemplative experience in which silence becomes an expressive force in its own right. **Silence in Motion:** It does not stand still; it flows through time, slipping between moments. It breathes where everything else comes to rest, accompanying what remains unsaid. A silence in motion, like a shadow behind the light. **Silence Within:** An inner silence—one that cannot be explained or described. It dwells in the depths of awareness, where thought becomes feeling, and feeling becomes a story beyond words. **Silence Breaking:** When silence thickens, it becomes almost unbearable. Then it breaks—not with a cry, but with an eruption of presence. It is the moment when silence becomes louder than any sound.

Richard Rodney Bennett - Four Piece Suite: Divertimento (1974): Richard Rodney Bennett's *Four Piece Suite* reflects the composer's stylistic versatility and refined craftsmanship. Known for bridging modernism, jazz, and lyric romanticism, Bennett writes music here that is rhythmically incisive yet elegantly shaped. The suite unfolds in contrasting movements that highlight clarity of texture and dynamic interplay between the performers. At times sparkling and

urbane, at others introspective and harmonically rich, the work reveals Bennett's gift for combining structural sophistication with immediate expressive appeal.

Philip Glass – Four Movements for Two Pianos, No. IV (2008): *Four Movements for Two Pianos* exemplifies Philip Glass's signature minimalist style. Built from repeating patterns, shifting harmonies, and gradual rhythmic transformation, the work creates a hypnotic sense of motion and pulse.

Bios

Elena Christodoulou is an internationally acclaimed pianist who has performed solo and chamber music recitals across North America, Europe, Asia, and North Africa, appearing in major cultural centers including Boston, Salt Lake City, Vienna (Konzerthaus), Salzburg, Rome, Cairo (Opera House), Dubai, Athens (Megaron Hall).

She has collaborated as a soloist with distinguished orchestras such as the Wiener KammerOrchester, Tehran Symphony orchestra, Italian string orchestra "Partenopea", the Orchestra of Colours, the Greek Saxophone Orchestra (artistic direction T. Kerkezos) and her performances have been broadcast by Greek national media.

A Fulbright and Onassis Foundation scholar, she earned her Bachelor's degree from The American College of Greece (B.A. in music) and her Master's degree in Piano Performance from the Boston Conservatory at Berklee. Alongside her performing career, she is dedicated to teaching, masterclasses, and promoting contemporary Greek repertoire worldwide.

Christine Tokatlian, Assistant professor at Deree - The American College of Greece and AEGEAS-CNPC fellow, is a concert pianist awarded by the Academy of Athens.

She has performed as a soloist in Greece, the UK, Italy, Armenia, Istanbul, Germany, Lebanon and the USA and in chamber music concerts with distinguished artists such as the Komitas Quartet and the Aenaon String Quartet.

She has also premiered Khatchaturian's Piano Concerto with the State Orchestra of Thessaloniki. Christine's CD, *Armenian Piano Images*, presents rare Armenian works including several world premieres. She has recorded with various ensembles and artists and in a range of musical styles and is particularly interested in new music. She has extensively worked, performed and recorded music of *The Collective*.



Her PhD research focuses on redefining Armenian musical identity through the study of contemporary Armenian piano music and has been presented in international conferences in Athens, London, Istanbul, Berlin and Latvia-soon in Serbia and Thessaloniki.

Christine serves as a jury member in national competitions and gives piano masterclasses in Greece and abroad. Her students have been awarded several prizes and distinctions in international piano competitions.