



DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Sunday, March 8, 2026 • 1:00 PM

CLARA DODGE

Junior Recital

Brennan Family Recital Hall
2330 North Halsted Street • Chicago

Sunday, March 8, 2026 • 1:00 PM
Brennan Recital Hall

CLARA DODGE, CELLO

Junior Recital

WONEE KIM, PIANO

PROGRAM

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975)
Cello Sonata in D minor, Op. 40 (1934)

- I. Allegro non troppo
- II. Allegro
- III. Largo
- IV. Allegro

- Intermission -

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)
Cello Sonata in G minor, Op. 65 (1846–1847)

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Scherzo
- III. Largo
- IV. Allegro

Clara Dodge is from the studio of Melissa Kraut. This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the degree Bachelor of Music.

As a courtesy to those around you, please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices. Flash photography is not permitted.

PROGRAM NOTES

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975)

Cello Sonata in D minor, Op. 40 (1934)

Duration: 25 minutes

Born in 1906 and living during Soviet-era Russia, Shostakovich's works are distinctive for his use of sharp contrasts, vivid and sometimes grotesque characters, and irony. During most of his career, Socialist Realism tightly restricted art in the USSR, mandating the promotion of Soviet life as idealistic and forcing artists to avoid certain subjects at the threat of imprisonment or deportation. This allowed for a very narrow range of expression, constricting artistic integrity and limiting artists, which invariably affected Shostakovich as a composer. Publicly denounced twice and often risking arrest, many of Shostakovich's works offer a glimpse into the turmoil and fear he endured.

At first glance, Cello Sonata in D minor, Op. 40, composed in 1934, seems to be no exception. The piece flows from a dream-like first movement in sonata form to a striking almost dance macabre-like second movement in a quick-paced 3/4, to a slow introspective and mournful third movement, ending with a rondo-like final movement flavored with Shostakovich's characteristic sarcastic humor and mechanical energy. However, composed two years before he was first denounced by the Soviet government, many believe instead that the piece was written to process the composer's affair with a student he met at a Leningrad festival featuring his *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. During this time he divorced his wife, Nina. The cello sonata was written in two weeks during his separation from his wife. A year later they were remarried, and the following year brought the birth of their daughter.

I prefer to approach this work with a combination of both interpretations, viewing it both as a testament to the turmoil of his personal and professional life. The first movement begins with long lines in the cello and flowing piano arpeggios, aching in the beautiful yet melancholic D minor. Like a maladaptive daydream, the movement meanders longingly. On occasion, more energetic and aggressive passages burst through the texture, often utilizing triplet figures, a darker reality threatening this elaborate dream, but these outbursts are quickly soothed. The movement ends unusually, the first theme restated, though this time at a ghostly *Largo tempo* and chromatically reharmonized.

The second movement slices through the slow silence the first movement left us with immediately, opening with a saw-like *moto perpetuo* figure in the cello. Written in ABA form, here we first see Shostakovich's mastery of satire, cello and piano partners in a darkly comedic minuet. It is reminiscent in character of a *danse macabre*, blending death and celebration, simultaneously horrific and exhilarating. Any mournful feelings or thanatophobia cannot be lingered on, the intensity of the music consuming.

The third movement begins with solo cello *con sordino*, tone distant and penitent, the tempo now *Largo*, like we are returning to where the first movement left us. Out of breath, the dance of the second movement dissolves, as does the daydream of the opening. Now we are left alone with nothing but untainted reality staring back at us. Like a confession, the movement slowly grows, the mute removed in the middle, a cathartic climax winding back down into another *con sordino* ending section. Here, there are no elaborate fantasies or dancing skeletons to serve as distractions, just regret and loneliness.

Fast paced, at first listen there could seem to be celebration or a victorious feeling in the final movement of this piece. However, similar to several of his symphonies where triumph is sarcastic and marches are forced, there is a sarcasm to this finale. Filled with distinct articulation and contrasting simple and compound subdivisions, there is an uneasy quality to the movement, reminiscent of smiling with gritted teeth. Many motives are exaggerated, a bitter taste lingering. The section with accented string crossings in the cello, intervals often an octave or larger, is particularly sarcastic. The very ending has a similar ironic feeling, a sudden triumphant motif bursting from the contemplative and almost heartbeat-like *pizzicato* cello part, piano now repeating the cello's melody from the beginning.

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

Cello Sonata in G minor, Op. 65 (1846–1847)

Duration: 30 minutes

One of the few pieces written for an instrument other than piano, Frédéric Chopin's Cello Sonata in G minor was the last work of his to be published during his lifetime. The last three movements were first publicly performed at the composer's final public concert, the first movement omitted due to negative reception by friends of Chopin's. The piece offers a glimpse at the route that Chopin's composition style could have taken had he not died at the early age of 39.

The sonata has four movements, all extremely distinct in character. The first movement is ballade-like, composed in typical sonata form; the second a Scherzo in ABA form; the third a Largo with vocal qualities; and finally the fourth, a rondo with a dance quality. Notice the half-step motif first heard in the cello's opening notes and recurring throughout the piece. This is a compositional principle known as cyclic unity, a technique that places Chopin ahead of his time, as it would only become popular in the latter half of the 19th century after his death.

It is difficult to imagine that the first movement was omitted in the piece's first performance. Yearning in character, the piano and cello exchange melodies throughout the movement, oscillating from euphoria to trepidation. Deeply romantic, it strikes the listener with the image of a new love, relationship fragile and eliciting both excitement and uncertainty.

The Sonata's second movement, the Scherzo, has two distinct sections, the first of which recurs at the end of the movement (hence the ABA form). The first section begins with the same half-step motif in the cello as the first movement, and has a hurried character to it. Written in a 3/4 time signature but felt in one, the movement has a waltz-like feeling but there is also a sense of urgency in the way the piano and cello part overlap, often interrupting one another. The middle section is a sweeter cantabile, the motion more coordinated. Here we truly feel the dance, both grand and amusing, at times perhaps hinting at the character of the Largo. This section doesn't linger too long, however, and we quickly return to the first section.

The third movement Largo has a beautiful simplicity to it. Like recalling the middle section of the Scherzo, the cello moves languidly through this very vocal melody, switching between two voices set in dramatically different ranges of the instrument. The movement feels very much like a sigh, the release of the breath held in the hurry of the previous movement.

The fourth movement, an Allegro, is unsettled in character. Again, we are met with the same half-step motif in the opening theme. The opening theme is recurrent, passed between the cello and piano, and sometimes played in canon between both instruments. The movement is also filled with dotted rhythms, lending a feeling of forward motion. It shifts characters frequently, never remaining on any one emotion for very long. In many ways, the movement is looking back on a memory— perhaps the turbulent relationship of the first

movement— and entertaining what could have been had different decisions been made. Finally, after much reminiscing, Chopin switches to G major, contrasting with the Sonata's main melancholy key of G minor. Leaving the what-ifs behind, the sonata's final bars are hopeful, skipping joyfully into the future.

Notes by Clara Dodge

DEPAUL
UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MUSIC



804 West Belden Avenue
Chicago, IL 60614
773.325.7260
music.depaul.edu

Sign up for Music @ DePaul E-Notes!

Receive monthly updates in your inbox on performances taking place at the School of Music, as well as special offers and discounts to ticketed events! You can choose to unsubscribe from the list at any time. We have a strict privacy policy and will never sell or trade your email address.

You can sign up for E-Notes by visiting music.depaul.edu and clicking on Concerts and Events.