HANOVER, NH— One person, one instrument: there’s no musical encounter quite like that of pianist and piano, especially when the piano is a massive, mellow 50-year-old Steinway Model A concert grand, and the pianist is a leading classical concert artist.

Two such encounters by visiting artists bookend the Hop’s 2013-14 season: Vladimir Feltsman on Friday, Aug. 9, and Gabriela Montero on Wednesday, April 16. In between, Hop pianist-in-residence Sally Pinkas gives a solo concert on Monday, March 3. (Pinkas also performs on Wednesday, Nov. 13, as part of an ensemble.)

Each of the three concerts offers a unique journey through the classical piano repertoire of the past three centuries.

Feltsman (“quite simply an amazing pianist”—The New York Times) plays for Hop audiences a program he’ll perform about a week later at the famed Aspen Music Festival: Haydn’s Sonata No. 31 in A-flat Major, Schubert’s Sonata in A minor, D. 537, Liszt’s Ballade No. 2 in B minor, S.171 and Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude (from Harmonies poétiques et religieuses, S. 173), and Scriabin’s Vers la flamme (Poème), Op. 72. The Russian-born Feltsman experienced the heights and depths of the Soviet Union’s treatment of its artists before emigrating to the West in 1987. Out of that rigor and repression, he has carved a reputation as one of the most versatile and constantly interesting musicians of our time. MusicWeb-International called him “sovereign over every idiom he plays and records…up there with the likes of Sokolov, Volodos, Kissin, Pollini, Zimerman, Perahia…Pires and Argerich….” Feltsman is now surely in his mature prime.” Wrote The Philadelphia Inquirer, “He plays a piano as though he is speaking through it. And he has a lot to say…Rarely do I spend so much time at the edge of my seat.”

Montero (“crackling rhythmic brio, subtle shadings, steely power…soulful lyricism…unsentimental expressivity”—The New York Times) performs Brahms’ Four Pieces for Piano, Op. 119, among his most personal and moving compositions; and Schumann’s Fantasy in C Major, Op. 17, considered a defining Romantic work. She’ll also offer her fascinating improvisations based on audience-suggested tunes that she transforms into impromptu “classical” compositions.

Montero’s visionary interpretations have won her a quickly expanding audience and devoted following at the world’s leading concert halls and festivals. In addition to her brilliant and nuanced classical interpretations, her unique personal style comes from her improvisational gifts. “I connect to my
audience in a completely unique way – and they connect with me. Because improvisation is such a huge part of who I am, it is the most natural and spontaneous way I can express myself."

Pinkas (“she plays as if every measure were a new revelation”—The Boston Globe), juxtaposes Mozart’s dramatic Fantasy and Sonata in C Minor and Schumann’s impassioned Faschingsschwant Aus Wien with the neoclassical Variations in C by Boston-based contemporary composer Harold Shapero.

Praised for her exquisite tone and driving energy, Pinkas commands a wide range of repertoire. With Evan Hirsch (The Hirsch-Pinkas Piano Duo) she has toured extensively, and has premiered and recorded works by George Rochberg, Daniel Pinkham and Thomas Oboe Lee for the Naxos and Arsis labels. With flutist Fenwick Smith, Pinkas has recorded a 3-CD set featuring the music of Philippe Gaubert, as well as a Martinu disc, for the Naxos label. She is a member of Trio Tremonti and Ensemble Schumann, and appears regularly with the Adaskin String Trio.

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Founded in 1962, the Hopkins Center for the Arts is a multi-disciplinary academic, visual and performing arts center dedicated to uncovering insights, igniting passions, and nurturing talents to help Dartmouth and the surrounding Upper Valley community engage imaginatively and contribute creatively to our world. Each year the Hop presents more than 300 live events and films by visiting artists as well as Dartmouth students and the Dartmouth community, and reaches more than 22,000 Upper Valley residents and students with outreach and arts education programs. After a celebratory 50th-anniversary season in 2012-13, the Hop enters its second half-century with renewed passion for mentoring young artists, supporting the development of new work, and providing a laboratory for participation and experimentation in the arts.

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