

School Matinée
Study Guide

Frederic Chiu



**Hopkins
Center for
the Arts**
at Dartmouth

Fri, Jan 26 • 11 am
Union Church, Claremont, NH



Welcome to Hop presents in Claremont

A performance needs an audience, so be prepared to play your part!

Theater Etiquette

When entering the hall, show consideration for all those sharing the building by remaining quiet and respectful in common areas. Applause is the best way to show your enthusiasm and appreciation! Backpacks, food, drink and gum are not allowed in the theater. Please turn off all cell phones and note that recording the performance or taking photos is strictly prohibited.

Information for Teachers

Review this study guide for context and activities that will help your students engage with the performance. Please read the email that accompanies this guide—Hop staff often request details about your visit including how many buses you'll be bringing and what accommodations you need.

This study guide's content was created by Aaron Rivkin, the Hopkins Center's Manager of Impact and Community Alliance. If you have questions about this guide, please direct them to Aaron Rivkin at aaron.s.rivkin@dartmouth.edu.

To download copies of this and other guides, visit
hop.dartmouth.edu/study-guides

Enjoy the Show!

The Hopkins Center's mission is to ignite and sustain a passion for the arts within Dartmouth and its greater community and to provide the core educational environment for the study, creation and presentation of the arts.

Did You Know?

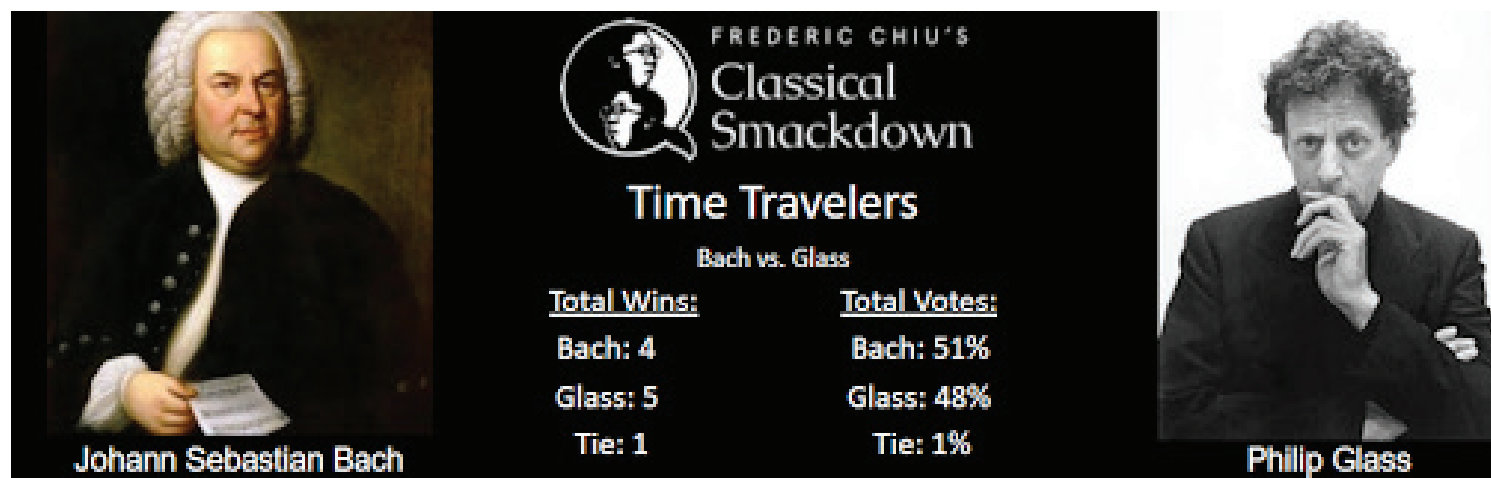
- The Hopkins Center is located on the ancestral homelands of the Abenaki people.
- The Hop presents over 100 live performance events each season
- In 1988, the Hop was named by the National Endowment for the Arts as one of the nation's exemplary performing arts centers.
- Currently the Hop is under construction until winter of 2025!

About the Show

One piano. Two composers. Three rounds. You decide!

In *Time Travelers: Bach vs. Glass*, pianist Frederic Chiu invites students to listen, debate and vote in a showdown between two iconic musicians.

Pianist Frederic Chiu pits two legendary composers against each other in a musical context. Students are invited to listen, debate and vote for their preferred artist over several short rounds of contrasting examples. Insightful commentary from Chiu brings to life favorites along with lesser-known pieces, making the audience's choices engaging, difficult and often surprising!



About the Artist

With a vibrant concert schedule, a legacy of 30 CDs and a stream of accolades from around the globe, pianist Frederic Chiu occupies a special place in the world of classical music. His non-traditional approach, including interdisciplinary collaborations, integration of new technologies and emphasis on audience engagement, distinguishes Chiu as an innovator and boundary-breaking 21st-century artist.

Frederic Chiu performs in major venues on five continents, such as Lincoln Center in New York, Le Châtelet in Paris, the Mozarteum in Buenos Aires, and extensive tours in smaller and unusual venues. He collaborates with classical music friends Joshua Bell, Pierre Amoyal and the St. Lawrence String Quartet, as well as non-classical friends like jazz pianist Bob James or storyteller David Gonzalez, to bring vivid live piano experiences to all audiences.



Contextual Background: Musical Styles



J.S. Bach

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was one of the most prolific and influential classical music composers. Born in Eisenach, Germany, he was a composer, organist, harpsichordist, violist and violinist in the music period known as the Baroque Era.

At the age of 14, Bach was awarded a choral scholarship to the prestigious St. Michael's School. By the age of 18, he was hired as the organist at St. Boniface's Church in Arnstadt. Bach received a large payment for his cantata *Gott ist mein König* which he composed in 1708.

Bach's music was not always well received during his lifetime. The famous Brandenburg Concertos in 1721 were composed as a job application for Margrave Ludwig of Brandenburg. Despite his efforts, Bach was unsuccessful in being hired for the position. He also received

harsh criticism of his works due to a new Italian composition style influencing German music. This made Bach's works seem outdated.

Regardless, Bach composed masterpieces which have stood the test of time in every Baroque genre, including sonatas, concertos, suites and cantatas, as well as innumerable keyboard, organ and choral works. He died on July 28, 1750 in Leipzig.

Composer Felix Mendelssohn made Bach's music popular in the mid-1800s when he performed works by Bach in concert.



Philip Glass

Philip Glass (1937-present) is an American composer who discovered classical music at his dad's radio repair and record shop. As an undergraduate at the University of Chicago, Glass studied mathematics and philosophy and leisurely played piano and learned about the composers Charles Ives and Anton Webern.

Glass decided to study composition at the Juilliard school with Vincent Persichetti, Darius Milhaud and William Bergsma and also completed two years of intensive study with Nadia Boulanger in Paris, France.

He is most known for his Minimalist musical style which Glass developed when researching the music of North Africa, India and the Himalayas. In 1976, Glass completed his four-and-a-half-hour epic landmark opera, *Einstein on the Beach*.

Over the course of Glass's career, he has composed 25 operas.

The Smackdown

Baroque composer Johann Sebastian Bach and 20th-century composer Philip Glass were masters at altering a listener's sense of time, with time slowing, stopping or passing more quickly than imagined. With 250 years separating the two composers, both have created music that speaks to diverse people around the globe and across time. Frederic Chiu's program highlights the similarities and the contrasts of these two musical icons.

About the Instruments



The piano was invented around 1700 by Bartolomeo Cristofori (1655-1731) of Italy. He was unsatisfied with the lack of control musicians had on the volume level of the harpsichord. Cristofori swapped the harpsichord's plucking system with a hammered system, still featured in modern pianos.



The hammered dulcimer

Most modern pianos have 88 keys with a range of seven octaves plus a minor third. There are often three pedals (soft pedal, sostenuto and sustain). Pianos are performed in a range of musical settings.

The piano is classified as a string instrument due to the strings, and percussion as the hammers strike the piano strings like a hammered dulcimer.

Pre and Post Performance Discussion Questions

Pre-Performance

- What kind of music do you like and why?
- Where and when do you listen to music?

Post-Performance

- What kinds of feelings are in the music you heard?
 - Did you think the music at the concert was good music? Why?
-

Learning Activities

Learning about J.S. Bach

Start by watching this short video about Johann Sebastian Bach: youtube.com/watch?v=GDkgEeOhawk

Split students into small groups and have them reflect upon the following questions:

- What is one thing you learned about J.S. Bach?
- How would you describe J.S. Bach's life to a friend?
- List some pieces Bach wrote
- Create a list of fun facts about J.S. Bach

Students can use electronic resources to learn more about Bach. Each group should share one fact about Bach they learned in a repeated order. Facts can be written on a whiteboard or smartboard until the group has exhausted a list of information about J.S. Bach.

Continuations:

1. Individual groups or the whole class can work together to create a fictional social media page for J.S. Bach.
2. Students can create questions they might ask to J.S. Bach if he were alive.

For classes which can read music, consider singing or playing through some of J.S. Bach's music:

Forty Bach Chorales

Bach Links:

- Google Doodle Celebrating J.S. Bach: google.com/doodles/celebrating-johann-sebastian-bach
- *The Dancing Master* Baroque Dance & the music of J.S. Bach: youtube.com/watch?v=58RBfgfdYI
- Johnny Gandelsman Bach Cello Suite 1 on Violin: youtube.com/watch?v=jTA-4xh3tws

Learning about Minimalism (Middle School/High School)

In this lesson students discover what Minimalism is and learn how to compose using Minimalist composition techniques.

Begin by playing the piece *I. Opening, Glassworks* by Philip Glass: youtube.com/watch?v=KSw5kwZ7Xxs

Lead a short discussion focused on open reflections about the music.

- What did they think about the work?
- What about the music was enjoyable or challenging?
- How would you describe the music to a friend?

Share with the class some information about the musical style called Minimalism which began in the early 1960s and originated in America. The Minimalism style was first featured as visual art and influenced Minimalist music in this time period.



Frank Stella (b. 1936), *Harran II*

Minimalist music compositions often feature one or two musical ideas (rhythmic or melodic) which are repeated and phased. Phasing is when the same musical idea is performed at different times. The overlapping of music ideas transforms the melodic ideas. The musical concepts found in Minimalism were directly influenced by some West African ceremonial music which also features cyclical musical patterns. Javanese Gamelan also uses cyclical patterns creating trancelike music.

Inform the class that they will be composing Minimalist music.

Note Additions

Where notes are added to a repeated phrase over time.

1. Think of a short repeated rhythm or melody (if you have pitched instruments). This could be done without instruments as simply as: thigh-slap, thigh-slap, clap.
2. Repeat this rhythm up to eight times and then add one more clap: thigh-slap, thigh-slap, clap, clap.
3. Repeat this new rhythm eight times. Then you get to decide: either return to the original rhythm or change again. If you want to change, then you can add another note OR take one away: thigh-slap, clap, clap.
4. How many different rhythms can you add?
5. You could divide your group in two (or three or four) groups and get each group to start one after the other, e.g., the second group starts the original rhythm just as the first group is changing to the second.

6. If you have pitched instruments like glockenspiels, choose notes like C D E to start with and then add F (and, in the third part, take away C). Chords on guitar or ukulele could also replace rhythms. Musical concepts, such as dynamic contrast (volume), tempo (speed), length of notes and attacks, can be added to the rhythm or melody.
7. How will the piece start and finish?

Considerations:

After a class demonstration, students can work individually or in small groups to create compositions. Students could use found instruments to play their compositions. Found instruments are instruments created with materials students have with them. For example a found instrument could be a pencil striking a water bottle. Additionally, students could use their voices and add lyrics to their compositions.

What should the name of the piece be?

Vocabulary

Study Guide Vocabulary

Arranger: A person who adapts or reinterprets a previously written piece of music.

Baroque: A style of European architecture and music in the 17th and 18th centuries. This was the time of Johann Sebastian Bach.

Composer: A person who writes music.

Idiom: A style or form of artistic expression that is characteristic of an individual, a period or movement, or a medium or instrument.

Minimalism: An art and music style featured in the 1960s. In music one or two musical themes are repeated over and over.

Tempo: The speed of a musical piece.

Tone: The quality or character of the music, including its meaning, feeling or attitude.

Additional Musical Concepts

Beat: A unit of musical rhythm.

Chord: Three or four notes played simultaneously in harmony.

Dynamics: The loudness or softness of a musical composition.

Forte: A musical dynamic that indicates musicians should play loud.

Measure: Sections of music where beats are divided up into two, three, four beats to a section.

Piano (musical dynamic): A musical dynamic that indicates musicians should play soft.

Pitch: The frequency of a note which determines how high or low it sounds.

Reprise: To repeat a previously played section of a composition.

Time Signature: A numeric symbol in sheet music which determines the number of beats to a measure.

Unison: Two or more voices or instruments playing the same note simultaneously.

Resources

Frederic Chiu's Website: fredericchiu.com/

Music Vision resources for music teachers: teachervision.com/subjects/art-music-drama/music

Social Studies and World History through Music and Dance resources by PBS Learning Media:
vermont.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/social-studies-and-world-history-through-music-and-dance/

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