

PRESENTS



**Jose Franch-Ballester, clarinet**

**Anna Polonsky, piano**

A Debut Series Event

Saturday, November 8, 2008 • 8 pm

Sunday, November 9, 2008 • 2 pm

Studio Theatre, Mondavi Center, UC Davis

There will be one intermission.

Individual support provided by Scott and Samia Foster.

*The artists and your fellow audience members appreciate silence during the performance. Please be sure that you have switched off cellular phones, watch alarms, and pager signals. Videotaping, photographing, and audio recording are strictly forbidden. Violators are subject to removal.*

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## PROGRAM

<i>Première Rhapsodie for Clarinet and Piano</i>	Debussy
Sonata for Clarinet and Piano in E-flat major, Op. 120, No. 2 <i>Allegro amabile</i> <i>Allegro appassionato</i> <i>Andante con moto</i>	Brahms
<i>Intermission</i>	
Sonata No. 2 in D major, Op. 94 <i>Andantino</i> <i>Scherzo: Allegretto</i> <i>Andante</i> <i>Allegro con brio</i>	Prokofiev
Sonata for Clarinet and Piano <i>Allegro Tristamente: Allegretto—Très calme—Tempo allegretto</i> <i>Romanza: Très calme</i> <i>Allegro con fuoco: Très animé</i>	Poulenc

**PROGRAM NOTES**

by Dr. Richard E. Rodda

**Première Rhapsodie for Clarinet and Piano (1909)**

Claude Debussy

(Born August 22, 1862, in St. Germain-en-Laye, France; died March 25, 1918, in Paris)

In December 1909 and January 1910, Debussy wrote two short works for the clarinet competitions at the Paris Conservatoire—a *Première Rhapsodie* intended as the principal examination piece and a *Petite Pièce* for sight reading. When Prosper Mimart, professor of clarinet at the Conservatoire and the dedicatee of the score, gave the public premiere of the *Première Rhapsodie* (Debussy never composed a “*deuxième rhapsodie*”) on January 16, 1911, at a Paris concert of the Société Musicale Indépendante, Debussy allowed that the piece was “among the most pleasant I have ever written.” As is true with virtually all of Debussy’s compositions, the *Première Rhapsodie* does not follow a traditional form, but is rather a seemingly free but actually tightly controlled elaboration of several thematic motives wrapped in the opulent harmonies and sonorities of his Impressionistic musical language.

**Sonata for Clarinet and Piano in E-flat major, Op. 120, No. 2 (1894)**

Johannes Brahms

(Born May 7, 1833, in Hamburg; died April 3, 1897, in Vienna)

Among Brahms’ close friends and musical colleagues during his later years was the celebrated pianist and conductor Hans von Bülow, who played Brahms’ music widely and made it a mainstay in the repertory of the superb court orchestra at Meiningen during his tenure there as music director from 1880 to 1885. Soon after arriving at Meiningen, Bülow invited Brahms to be received by the music-loving Duke Georg and his consort, Baroness von Heldburg, and the composer was provided with a fine apartment and encouraged to visit the court whenever he wished. (The only obligation upon the comfort-loving composer was to don the much-despised full dress for dinner.) At a concert in March 1891, he heard a performance of Weber’s F minor Clarinet Concerto by the orchestra’s principal player of that instrument, Richard Mühlfeld, and he was overwhelmed. So strong was the impact of the experience that Brahms was shaken out of a year-long creative lethargy, and the *Trio for Clarinet, Cello and Piano* (Op. 114) and the *Quintet for Clarinet and Strings* (Op. 115) were composed for Mühlfeld without difficulty between May and July 1891. Three years later, Brahms produced the two *Sonatas for Clarinet and Piano* (Op. 120) for Mühlfeld.

The autumnal opening movement of the E-flat major Clarinet Sonata follows traditional sonata form. The first theme is suffused with cool sunlight. After a transition on the main subject followed by a brief moment of silence, the second theme, another gently flowing melodic inspiration, is intoned introspectively by the clarinet. The development section is compact and lyrical. The sonata’s greatest expressive urgency is contained in its second movement, a stylistic hybrid of sophisticated Viennese waltz and Classical scherzo. For the finale of this, his last chamber composition, Brahms employed one of his most beloved structural procedures, the variation. The theme is presented by the clarinet with two echoing phrases from the piano alone. This spacious melody then becomes the subject of five variations.

**Sonata No. 2 in D major, Op. 94 (1943)**

Sergei Prokofiev

(Born April 23, 1891, in Sontzovka, Russia; died March 5, 1953, in Moscow)

Prokofiev conceived a special fondness for the flute during his stay in the 1920s in the United States, where he encountered what he called the “heavenly sound” of the French virtuoso Georges Barrère, solo flutist of the New York Symphony Orchestra and teacher at the Juilliard School. Two decades later, during some of the darkest days of World War II in the Soviet Union, Prokofiev turned to the flute as the inspiration for one of his most halcyon compositions. The Sonata for Flute and Piano in D major, his only such work for a wind instrument, was begun in September 1942 in Alma-Ata, where he and many other Russian artists had been evacuated as a precaution against the invading German armies. Early the following year, Prokofiev moved to Perm in the Urals, and it was in the relative calm of that city that the sonata was completed during the summer. In 1944, he arranged the work for violin and it has since also been adapted to clarinet.

Each of the sonata’s four movements is erected upon a Classical formal model. The main theme of the opening sonata-form *Andantino* is almost wistful in the simplicity with which it outlines the principal tonality of the work. A transition of greater animation leads to the subsidiary subject, whose wide range and dotted rhythms do not inhibit its lyricism. In typical Classical fashion, the exposition is marked to be repeated. The development elaborates both of the themes and adds to them a quick triplet figure played by the clarinet to begin the section. A full recapitulation, with appropriately adjusted keys, rounds out the movement. The second movement is a brilliantly virtuosic scherzo whose strongly contrasting trio is a lyrical strain in duple meter. The *Andante* follows a three-part form (A–B–A), with a skittering central section providing formal balance for the lovely song of the outer paragraphs. The finale is a joyous rondo based on the dancing melody given by the violin in the opening measures.

**Sonata for Clarinet and Piano (1962)**

Francis Poulenc

(Born January 7, 1899, in Paris; died January 30, 1963, in Paris)

The Clarinet Sonata, Poulenc’s last work except for the Sonata for Oboe and Piano, was composed in the summer of 1962 for Benny Goodman; Goodman and Leonard Bernstein gave the premiere in New York on April 10, 1963, ten weeks after the composer’s death from a heart attack in Paris. Rather than the sonata structure often used in the first movement of such works, the Clarinet Sonata opens with a three-part form in which a central section, at once benedictory and slightly exotic, is surrounded by a beginning and ending paragraph in quicker tempo. The second movement, marked “very sweetly and with melancholy,” is almost hymnal in its lyricism and quiet intensity. The finale is based on the progeny of a French music hall tune which is treated with good humor and sympathy rather than with parody.

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## ROBERT G. MONDAVI

**T**he Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts and the entire UC Davis community wish to pay tribute to Robert Mondavi, patriarch of the California wine industry and one of UC Davis' most ardent and generous supporters. He was 94 years old when he passed away last May, and we miss him dearly.

"Bob demonstrated that innovation and excellence are worthy and reachable goals, that universities are deserving of investment, that the sciences and the arts are essential and compatible companions, and that each of us—no matter what our calling in life—is capable of and responsible for creating a legacy," said Chancellor Larry Vanderhoef. "There is no doubt that his legacy is enduring."

Robert Mondavi helped transform California winemaking from a cottage industry of small wineries to an internationally recognized center of fine wine production, thus changing the world view of American wines. As an expression of his desire to improve not only California's wines, but also its quality of life, Robert Mondavi, together with his wife Margrit Biever Mondavi, generously supported cultural and educational institutions. Their philanthropy with regard to UC Davis has been nothing less than visionary, and we are extremely grateful.



In 2001, Robert and Margrit Mondavi gave \$25 million to help establish the Robert Mondavi Institute for Wine and Food Science, opening this month, and \$10 million to create the Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts, which debuted in 2002 and is now firmly established as the region's premier venue for the performing arts and arts education. The stature of Robert and Margrit Mondavi helped to ensure that the Mondavi Center would very quickly catch the attention of the arts world nationally and internationally. In June 2004, UC Davis presented Robert and Margrit Mondavi with the UC Davis Medal, the highest honor bestowed by the university. In December 2007, Robert was inducted into the California Hall of Fame.

"We are extremely saddened by the passing of Robert Mondavi, a man who almost single-handedly transformed the California wine industry and raised the profile of American wine in the eyes of the world," said Clare Hasler, executive director of the Robert Mondavi Institute for Wine and Food Science. "Mr. Mondavi's extraordinary gift, establishing the Robert Mondavi Institute for Wine and Food Science at UC Davis, will serve as an enduring reminder of his passion for the importance of wine and food in enhancing the quality of life. It also opens a new era of opportunity for the university's widely acclaimed wine and food programs for generations to come."

"ROBERT WAS A GREAT FRIEND TO THE MONDAVI CENTER, THE ARTS AND THIS GREAT UNIVERSITY, AND WE WILL ALL MISS HIM."  
—DON ROTH

A graduate of Stanford University, Robert Mondavi joined his father at the Sunnyhill Winery in St. Helena and later at Charles Krug, where he upgraded the technology of the family's enterprise, determined to raise wine quality. In 1966, he established the first major winery built in Napa Valley since the repeal of Prohibition with the goal of combining European craft and tradition with the latest in American technology, management, and marketing expertise. He succeeded in elevating the quality and reputation of California wines to such a degree that in the 1970s, the Robert Mondavi Winery was among the first to export premium wines.

"Robert was a great friend to the Mondavi Center and to the arts, and we all will miss him," said Don Roth, Mondavi Center executive director. "We are indebted to Robert and Margrit for ensuring that the Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts became a reality, and, indeed, surpassed all expectations. Today, the Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts stands as a sparkling monument to all who embrace the arts. We will always be most grateful."



**Jose Franch-Ballester, clarinet**

Winner of a coveted 2008 Avery Fisher Career Grant, Jose Franch-Ballester has been called “that rare find, an artist whose brilliant mastery of his instrument is matched by sound and secure gifts as a musician” by *The News-Gazette* (Champaign-Urbana, IL), and *The New York Sun* raved “Young Concert Artists has a winner!”

Franch-Ballester's 2008-2009 season includes appearances as soloist with the Victoria and Wichita Falls symphonies in Texas, and recitals and educational residencies at Asociacion Nacional de Conciertos in Panama, Pace University, Iowa State University, Buffalo Chamber Music Society, Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts, Fox Hill Village, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, and Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute. In 2007, he was selected for Carnegie Hall's Professional Training Workshop with Emanuel Ax and Richard Stoltzman, which concluded with a performance in Carnegie's Weill Hall.

Franch-Ballester is a member of Lincoln Center's Chamber Music Society Two and as a chamber musician is in demand for numerous festivals, including Chamber Music Northwest, Saratoga Performing Arts Center, Skaneateles Festival, Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, Music from Angel Fire, Usedomer Musikfestival in Germany, Verbier Festival in Switzerland, Cartagena Festival Internacional de Música in Colombia, and the 2006 Young Concert Artists Festival Week at Nexus Hall in Tokyo. He has performed Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* with Arnold Steinhardt, as well as the world premiere of Jake Heggie's song cycle *Winter Roses* with mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade in 2004. In February and March 2008, he toured California as guest artist with the Jupiter String Quartet.

Franch-Ballester's concerto soloist appearances include the Vallejo Symphony Orchestra, Santa Barbara Chamber Orchestra, and the Orchestra of St. Luke's under the direction of Keith Lockhart at Lincoln Center's Rose Hall, as well as appearances in his native Spain with the Orquesta de Radio Television Española, Orquesta Sinfonica Castellon, Orquesta Supramusica, Orquesta Cambra XX Teatro Monumental (Madrid), and the Musica de Vall de Uxo Orchestra.

He won First Prize in the 2004 Young Concert Artists International Auditions. He was also awarded the Alexander Kasza-Kasser Prize, which sponsored his Washington, D.C. debut at the Kennedy Center, and the Claire Tow Prize, which sponsored his New York debut at the 92nd Street Y. He performs numerous recitals and educational residencies across the United States at venues including Merkin Hall in New York, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, the La Jolla Music Society, the Kravis Center for the Performing Arts, Washington Center for the Performing Arts, Missouri State University, Monmouth College, Western Michigan University, Boise State University, Middle Keys Concert Association, Harvard Musical Association, and Macomb Center for the Performing Arts.

Franch-Ballester began clarinet lessons at the age of nine with Venancio Rius Marti and gave his first recital in Valencia at the age of 16. He graduated from the Joaquin Rodrigo Music Conservatory in Valencia in 2000. He won First Prize in the Competition of the Cultural Council of Valencia for three consecutive years (2001-2003) and First Prize in the “Francisco Hernandez Guirado” Interpretive Soloists Competition, both in Spain.

Born in Moncofa, Spain, into a family of clarinetists and Zarzuela singers, Franch-Ballester came to the U.S. to the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where he studied clarinet with Donald Montanaro and Ricardo Morales and chamber music with Pamela Frank; he graduated in 2005. He is also on the roster of Astral Artistic Services in Philadelphia, having won first prize at its 2004 national auditions, and performs with the woodwind quintet Astral Winds.

**Anna Polonsky, piano**

Anna Polonsky is in wide demand as a soloist and chamber musician. She has appeared with the Moscow Virtuosi and Vladimir Spivakov, the Buffalo Philharmonic with JoAnn Falletta, St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble, Columbus Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, and many others. Polonsky has collaborated with the Guarneri, Orion, and Audubon quartets and with such musicians as Mitsuko Uchida, David Shifrin, Richard Goode, Ida and Ani Kavafian, Cho-Liang Lin, Arnold Steinhardt, Anton Kuerti, Gary Hoffman, and Fred Sherry. She is regularly invited to perform chamber music at festivals such as Marlboro, Chamber Music Northwest, Seattle, Moab, Music@Menlo, Bridgehampton, Bard, and Caramoor, as well as at Bargemusic in New York City. Polonsky has given concerts in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Vienna Konzerthaus, Alice Tully Hall, and Stern, Weill, and Zankel Halls at Carnegie Hall, and has toured extensively throughout the U. S., Europe, and Asia. A frequent guest at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, she was a member of CMS Two during 2002-2004. In 2006, she took a part in the European Broadcasting Union's project to record and broadcast all of Mozart's keyboard sonatas, and in 2007, she performed a Carnegie Hall solo recital, inaugurating the Emerson Quartet's Perspectives Series.

Polonsky made her solo piano debut at the age of seven at the Special Central Music School in Moscow. She immigrated to the United States in 1990 and attended high school at the Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan. She received her bachelor of music degree from the Curtis Institute of Music, where she worked with the renowned pianist Peter Serkin, and continued her studies with Jerome Lowenthal, earning her master's degree from the Juilliard School. Polonsky received a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship in 2003. In addition to performing, she serves on the piano faculty of Vassar College. She is a Steinway Artist.



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