



photo by Brad Gellman

Piano Recital with  
**Ellie Alpern**

Sunday, November 12 | 2:00 PM  
The Church of St. Francis Xavier

### ***The Chimes of Cythere***

This piece is from a book I found of French music from the 1600s and 1700s in which the composers wrote about birds, brooks, little windmills, and country maidens. The music paints a picture of what life was like at that time, living close to nature and being outdoors much of the time. The Chimes of Cythere is a beautiful opening for a concert, imitating the sound of a carillon ringing out over the countryside.

### ***The Prophet Bird***

This piece evokes a mysterious bird coming to foretell the future. In my imagination, the bird is a beautiful, exotic, peacock-like creature. The middle section brings to mind a court where the bird royalty assembles to hear what the Prophet Bird will say. At the end, I see the bird disappearing into the lush foliage, having delivered the prophecy.

### ***The Call of the Birds***

This is another piece from the French music book. The bright trills and swooping allegros recall flocks of birds flying and singing to one another.

### ***The Tempest Sonata***

I learned this piece after hearing the Third Movement in the film "32 Films About Glenn Gould." It always reminds me of the top of my driveway where the autumn leaves would be picked up by the breeze into swirling little tornadoes and our dog, Milo, would leap high in the air to chase them. The First Movement is also stormy, with contrasting moments of peacefulness and wild tempests

### ***A trio of Debussy preludes***

Voiles, or Sails, carries the listener away from the storm of the Beethoven sonata and into Debussy's watery world. We are on the water, in the mist, listening to the ripples while the large sailboats silently glide past. The Engulfed Cathedral is a well known and well-loved prelude that evokes a mysterious cathedral submerged in deep water. It rises up majestically from the depths and appears right in front of us to a beautiful theme with almost terrifyingly loud chords, then sinks back into the sea. Ondine is a water sprite, playfully swimming and mischievously leaping. There is a pursuit, and people try furiously to catch her, but she swims away at the end. I always imagine that she transforms into sunlight dancing across the surface of the water.

### ***The Waldstein***

The Waldstein is one of Beethoven's greatest sonatas. I learned this piece in music school and relearned it during the COVID-19 pandemic, when I was grateful to play it and hold on to a bit of sanity during those chaotic months. It is a fast piece, except for a brief segment in the middle, and sweeps the listeners along to a thrilling climax

## **Biography**

Ellie Alpern holds a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from West Chester University and a Master of Music in Piano Performance from Catholic University of America. Based in Philadelphia, she has performed extensively in solo recitals, taught at Settlement Music School as well as other music schools in the region, and accompanied for such varied productions as “West Side Story,” “The Magic Flute,” and a touring dance and movement company. She is also a singer in Anna Crusis Feminist Choir, the longest running feminist choir in the United States. Ellie fervently believes that everyone should have the opportunity to connect with the absolutely beautiful, rich, and varied music written for the piano, and she is thrilled to be playing these favorite works in this magnificent space.



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## **Mission Statement**

The Church of St. Francis Xavier, a Roman Catholic parish in the Jesuit tradition, strives to be a prophetic, welcoming community, and an inclusive witness to the presence of Christ Jesus in our midst. Mindful of our utter reliance on God, and need for God's grace, we rejoice together in our celebration of the sacraments and proclamation of the Gospel. As a people of hope, we commit ourselves through prayerful and creative discernment to respond to God in our time by: being a respectful community where seekers and their questions are welcomed, where injustice is challenged, where the poor, the alienated and the marginalized find a home, and where people are refreshed, reconciled and renewed.

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