



department of music
EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

GUEST RECITAL SERIES

featuring

José Ramón Méndez, piano

March 10, 2025, 7:30 p.m.
Doudna Fine Arts Center
Recital Hall

Program

Four Impromptus, Op. 90, D. 899

Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

- I. Impromptu in C Minor—Allegro molto moderato
- II. Impromptu in E-flat Major—Allegro
- III. Impromptu in G-flat Major—Andante
- IV. Impromptu in A-flat Major—Allegretto

Intermission

Fantasie in C Major, Op. 17

Robert Schumann
(1810-1856)

- I. Durchaus phantastisch und leidenschaftlich vorzutragen (To be played with fantasy and passion)—Im Legendenton (In the tone of a legend)
- II. Mäßig. Durchaus energisch (Moderate. Thoroughly energetic)
- III. Langsam getragen. Durchweg leise zu halten (Slow and sustained. To be kept soft throughout)

*Funding for this program was provided through
the New and Emerging Artist Series Endowment.*

Described as "an artist with a polished sound and tremendous constructive power" and hailed by the *Hoja del Lunes de Madrid*, as "the Spanish pianist of his generation," **José Ramón Méndez** is one of the most exciting Spanish pianists of today.

Recent performances include Chopin's first piano concerto with the Cuban National Symphony Orchestra and Manuel de Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* with the Nittany Valley Symphony, as well as numerous solo and chamber music performances in the United States, Europe, and Asia. His playing has been featured on WQXR's "Performance Today" and on Classical KMFA. He has been a guest performer at many music festivals, including the Caramoor Festival, Barge Music Series, Festival Internacional de Piano de las Islas Canarias, Music at Penn's Woods, Amalfi Coast International Music Festival, "Tocando el Cielo," Musica en Compostela, the Stony Brook International Piano Festival, and the Santander International Music Festival, among many others. As a chamber musician, Méndez has collaborated with such distinguished artists as Karl Leister, Itzhak Perlman, Michael Tree, Pascual Martinez-Nieto, and Pinchas Zukerman.

Méndez received his first music instruction from his father and by the age of 7 was already performing on Spanish television and radio stations. He made his solo debut at the age of 11 at Spain's Oviedo Philharmonic Society, the youngest performer ever to do so in the history of the society. He first gained international recognition when he performed Liszt's first piano concerto under the direction of Sergiu Commissiona at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. Since then, he has concertized extensively in his native Spain, the United States, Italy, England, Portugal, Holland, and Japan, to great acclaim.

At the age of 18, Méndez' success brought him to the United States, where he began his studies at Manhattan School of Music in New York City. He completed his bachelor's and master's degrees in piano performance with renowned pedagogue Solomon Mikowsky and went on to finish his Doctorate of Musical Arts under the tutelage of Byron Janis and Miyoko Lotto. During his stay in New York, he won top prizes in many international competitions, including Pilar Bayona International Piano Competition, Hilton Head Island International Piano Competition, Frederick Chopin Competition in New York, and Hermanos Guerrero International Piano Competition, among others.

Méndez' professional teaching career began in 1996, when he was invited to teach master classes at the Gijon School of Music.

Since then, he has given master classes in numerous cities in Spain, including Lugo, Aviles, Valencia, Gijon, Oviedo, Santiago de Compostela, and Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, as well as in the United States at top music schools such as Oberlin Conservatory, Northwestern University, University of Michigan, and Columbus State University. Mendez also taught as an assistant teacher to Miyoko Lotto at the Perlman Music Program, a program for gifted young musicians founded by the world famous violinist Itzhak Perlman. He was formerly a member of the keyboard faculties of University of Texas at Austin, New York University, The Pennsylvania State University, Northwestern University, and Northern Arizona University. He is the artistic director and on the faculty of the Gijon International Piano Festival in Gijon, Spain, and is frequently invited to perform and teach at various summer festivals.