

Pianist Joel Fan will perform with the Helena Symphony on Saturday, Jan. 25.

## 'THE MIGHTY PIANO'

Acclaimed pianist Fan to play major works with Helena Symphony

Beethoven's Symphony  
No. 4 also on program

By MARGA LINCOLN  
INDEPENDENT RECORD

Renowned virtuoso pianist Joel Fan returns to Helena Saturday, Jan. 25, for his second concert with the Helena Symphony, "Beethoven and the Mighty Piano" at the Helena Civic Center.

And, better news yet, he will be performing two major works: Karol Szymanowski's Symphony No. 4 for Piano and Orchestra and Franz Liszt's Piano Concerto No. 1, during the second half of the program.

The concert opens at 7:30 p.m. with the orchestra performing Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony No. 4.

"It's very rare that a soloist can do two monumental works," conductor Allan R. Scott said of Saturday's program. "It's a gift to have someone who performs with all the great orchestras in the world ...and works with Yo Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble" to perform here. "He's a very well recognized artist — very respected."

"I must say how excited I am to be coming back to Helena to perform these amazing, beautiful works," Fan said in an IR phone interview from New York City.

"The Liszt concerto is really one of the classic war horses of the literature. It's a really — what I would call a compact unified work. He was a true innovator when it came to the musical form. He wanted the entire piece to be really organic....It goes together in one stream of consciousness. There's a lot of fireworks to the piano — in the typical Lisztian way. The Liszt is written as a true piano showpiece."

The piece by Szymanowski, a Polish composer, is less well known.

"One of the themes of my career has been putting the traditional with the rare," Fan said. "This is why it's so nice to do it on an orchestral program. The last one is like Prokofiev — it is very rhythmic and a lot of fun."

Fan is playing the two works back to back and invites the audience to listen to how the piano is treated by the two different composers.

"It's an unusual concert for a pianist," he admits, "to be doing two different concertos on the same half - is pretty unusual."

### If you go ...

**What:** Helena Symphony and Joel Fan perform "Beethoven and the Mighty Piano"

**When:** 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 25

**Where:** Helena Civic Center, 340 Neill Ave.

**Cost:** \$10 to \$50, free tickets to music students available through their teachers

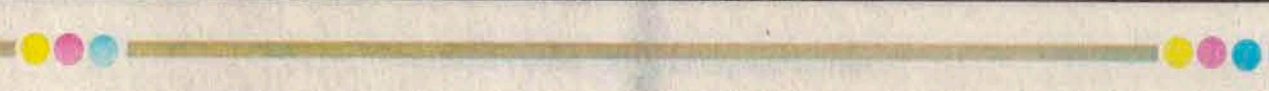
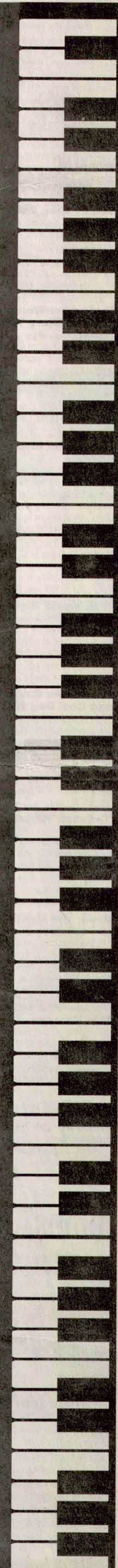
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As to the challenges? "I wouldn't call them challenges ... it's all about the spontaneity in the moment of creation — it's thrilling and exciting. I think of it as an opportunity."

Fan is looking forward to playing with conductor Scott, he said. "I think Allan is a masterful conductor. Organized. Great technique. Extremely, extremely musically insightful. I'm really excited to be working with him again."

Shortly after Helena, Fan travels to Bogotá, Colombia, to perform. And this past season he completed a massive music

Go to 8 for more Piano





# In three-horse Oscar race, a favorite is hard to pick

By JAKE COYLE  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

In a hydra-headed Oscar race, "American Hustle," "12 Years a Slave" and "Gravity" all have legitimate claims to favorite status. And that's a good thing.

Even if a front-runner emerges from the much-nominated trio over the six weeks leading up to the 86th Academy Awards on March 2, the credentials of each film should be plenty to heighten nerves and add to the drama on Oscar night.

"It's an extremely competitive year," said David O. Russell, whose "American Hustle" landed 10 nods, tied for most with "Gravity," in nominations announced Jan. 16 from Beverly Hills, Calif. "It could go any which way."

Steve McQueen's "12 Years a Slave," an unflinching depiction of 19th century American slavery, trailed close behind with nine nominations, including nods for McQueen, lead actor Chiwetel Ejiofor and supporting players Michael Fassbender and Lupita Nyong'o. Since its festival debut, it's been seen by many as the movie to beat, a film bearing heavy historical gravitas that the lighter "American Hustle" and the literally weightless "Gravity" can't match.

But Russell's wild Abscam comedy, thick in 1970s style, has ridden a wave of enthusiasm for its manic performances. It's three in a row for Russell, too, who may be due for bigger Oscar wins

than his much-nominated films "Silver Linings Playbook" and "The Fighter" managed. A year after "Silver Linings Playbook" landed nominations in all four acting categories, "Hustle" managed the same feat with Amy Adams, Christian Bale, Jennifer Lawrence and Bradley Cooper all receiving nods.

Then there's "Gravity," which, along with nominations for director Alfonso Cuarón and lead actress Sandra Bullock, exerted its force with nominations in all seven technical categories. With \$670 million in worldwide box-office, the 3-D space odyssey is easily the most popular of the best-picture nominees, widely credited with reinvigorating the spectacle of the big-screen experience.

The three films will vie in the best picture category with "Captain Phillips," "Dallas Buyers Club," "Her," "Nebraska," "The Wolf of Wall Street" and "Philomena." If any of them poses a dark-horse threat, it's Martin Scorsese's "The Wolf of Wall Street," a nearly three hour-long portrait of hedonism and greed that some have said glorifies former trader Jordan Belfort.

"The Wolf of Wall Street" landed five big nominations, including best director (Scorsese, his eighth for directing), best actor (Leonardo DiCaprio), best supporting actor (Jonah Hill), and best adapted screenplay (Terence Winter). DiCaprio, now a four-time nominee, said he felt vindicated.

"To be recognized like

this and to see that there were enough people out there who said, 'Look, we get what this film' — not what it's trying to say, but what it's trying to reflect," said DiCaprio. "Nobody wants to be misunderstood."

The nominations seemed to favor new blood over esteemed veterans. In an especially strong best actor race, Tom Hanks ("Captain Phillips") and Robert Redford ("All Is Lost") were surprisingly left out. Emma Thompson was omitted from best actress, and her film, Disney's making-of "Mary Poppins" tale "Saving Mr. Banks," was overlooked in the best picture category.

The best actor category is led by first-time nominee Matthew McConaughey, whose Texas HIV drama "Dallas Buyers Club" earned six nominations.

"I'm at home in Malibu, having a cup of tea, catching the sunrise. My newborn's walking around," said McConaughey, whose nod capped a remarkable reinvention by the actor after sliding into mediocrity. "What a great alarm clock and news to wake up to this morning."

Others enjoying their first nod were Ejiofor, McQueen, Fassbender, Barkhad Abdi (a limo driver before being cast as a Somali pirate in "Captain Phillips"), 84-year-old June Squibb ("Nebraska") and Jared Leto, who had devoted himself to music before returning to play a transsexual in "Dallas Buyers Club."

## Piano

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tour in China.

Fan credits his parents for his passion for music. "They were big music lovers and had really great taste in music. It was really wonderful to grow up listening to (Glenn) Gould, (Vladimir) Horowitz ..., all these great pianists. They really loved this music — that was their influence.

Fan, who started playing piano at age 5, made his performing debut with the New York Philharmonic at age 11.

Throughout his career, he's earned accolades from reviewers across the country.

"Mr. Fan has a powerful touch and a big sound... his playing was the picture of textured clarity... with the sparkle and rhythmic suppleness of a jazz improviser," wrote the New York Times.

"Fan plays beautifully, turning all the spice and pizzazz into pure pleasure," wrote The Arizona Republic.

Scott calls the Liszt piano concerto "a powerhouse."

Known as an outstanding pianist, Liszt was the "rock star" of his day. Scott compares his popularity at that time to that of Elvis Presley and the Beatles. Over the course of his career, hundreds of thousands came to hear him play. Known for his enormous sound, "he probably broke every piano he played."

"You'll see why (he was such a star), there's such flair and drama to this music," said Scott. "He puts his entire personality into his work."

While the Liszt concerto may be more standard



This weekend's performance will be the second in Helena for Fan, who made his debut with the New York Philharmonic as an 11-year-old prodigy.

repertoire, the Szymanowski work is sort of a mixture of Rachmaninoff and Shostakovich, Scott said. "Even though he's Polish, he very much has this Russian sound. It's very rich, very lush and very rhythmic."

"Despite that he was having a pretty miserable life. This piece doesn't show that," Scott said of the work that he describes as having a "bright, optimistic and hopeful sound."

He was gay during a time there was little to no social acceptance of gay people. He was also suffering from tuberculosis and wrote this work to pay for his medical treatments.

The "pleasant, lovely and lyrical" work has an almost primal ending with the feel of "Carmina Burana," Scott said.

Like Szymanowski, Beethoven was also suffering at the time he composed Symphony No. 4, yet he too wrote an incredibly joyous work, Scott said. "They were both going through difficult times and their work shows none of that."

Although Beethoven had gone almost totally deaf, Scott said, "It's completely optimistic and wonderful."

"This is a side (of

Beethoven) we don't see very often," he said. "He's totally, completely in love. His second movement is one of the greatest love letters he ever wrote. It is gorgeous."

Yet the symphony has Beethoven's distinctive "fire" and "bloodiness" at the end. While some see this piece as a "polite" work by Beethoven, Scott disagrees. Although it has a lighthearted, humorous and fun feel to the music, it also has raw guttural energy.

Scott calls Saturday's concert a real treat for anyone who ever touched piano keys.

"Half the audience should be pianists," he predicted, particularly since music teachers free tickets to the concert.

"It features one masterpiece few pianists can play and one masterpiece that few know about. They are two very different works and are very powerful."

"It's an exciting concert. That's why it's 'Beethoven and the Mighty Piano.' You will get to see an all-star pianist, to see the versatility of what the composers can do and what someone like Joel Fan can do. He's a world class artist."

## Exhibits

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Road, 475-3811. Original charcoal and pastel drawings of historic ranch buildings still standing in Helena.

■ **Montana Historical Society Museum**, 225 N. Roberts, 444-2694. "And the Bride Wore: Montana Weddings 1900 to 1960," (through Nov. 1). "Domestic Economy: Managing the Home 1890-1920." Other exhibits - Winchester Lever-Action Rifles and an extensive collection of Charlie Russell works. Permanent exhibits: "Neither Empty nor Unknown: Montana in the Time of Lewis and Clark; "Montana Homefront 1942"; and "Young at Heart," a hands-on exhibit for children of all ages.

■ **Montana Military**

**Museum**, Fort Harrison, 324-3550, chronicles Montana's military experiences. Open Thursdays or by appointment.

■ **Montana Veterans Gallery**, 318 Fuller Ave. 459-2667 or www.mtvf.org. Original artwork and crafts by Montana veterans, hosted by the Montana Veterans Foundation.

■ **Mountain Spun**, 26 N. Last Chance Gulch, 422-1025. Black-and-white photos of the fiber arts community.

■ **Myrna Loy Center**, 15 N. Ewing, 443-0287. Showing portraits and painted furniture by Leah Lambert through Jan. 31. Reception Jan. 31 at 5 p.m.

■ **No Sweat Cafe**, 427 N. Last Chance Gulch, 442-6954. Pastels by Steve Westphal through Jan. 31.

■ **Real Food Market and**

**Deli**, 1096 Helena Ave., 443-5150. Art by members of the Art Center on display.

■ **Red Queen Phantom Gallery & Boutique**, Arcade Building, 111 N. Last Chance Gulch, 461-4080. An e-store with a main street presence: www.judykline.com Etsy link, 461-4080. Featuring mixed-media, jewelry, artwear and handbags by Judy Kline and Debrah Fosket.

■ **Residence Inn, Mar-**

**riott**, 2500 E. Custer Ave., 422-0296. Oil paintings by Carol Hagan and plain air, pastel landscapes by Kathryn Fehlig.

■ **Starbucks Coffee**, 608 N. Last Chance Gulch, 443-9170. Helena photographer Linda Roberts is exhibiting a collection of photos paying tribute to those who served at Pearl Harbor.

■ **State Capitol**, 1301 E 6th Ave, 444-3060. Work by

Montana "Treasured Artists," quilters Diana Simkins along with Beverly Marlow, Susan Noble and Linda Parker.

■ **Staggering Ox**, 400 Euclid, 443-1729. "Beneath the Ashes" by Jose Manuel Gonzales, who creates paintings from ash. Through February.

■ **Turman Larison Contemporary**, 337 N. Last Chance Gulch, 443-0340. "A Conversation of Paintings," with works by Brandon Reint-

jes, George Gogas, Sara Mast, Robert Royhl, Phoebe Toland and more.

■ **Upper Missouri Artists Gallery**, 7 N. Last Chance Gulch, 457-8240. Sculpture "Big Love" by Donna Wilson. Paintings by Louis Archambault and stone mosaics by Russell Ratcliff.

Need to update a Current Exhibits listing? E-mail info to [irarts@helenair.com](mailto:irarts@helenair.com).

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When: This 7-hour workshop consists of two Sundays; February 2nd and 9th, 12:00 to 3:30.  
Costs: \$80 by January 26th or \$100 after.  
To register and for information call:  
Lisa Fairman, Certified Advanced Rolfer 431-6667  
Wendy Fox, Licensed Massage Therapist 495-0760

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