

Sara Davis Buechner
(short biography: 276 words)

Sara Davis Buechner is one of the leading concert pianists of our time, a musician of “intelligence, integrity and all-encompassing technical prowess” (*New York Times*), with “sovereign command of the keyboard” (*Los Angeles Times*). Japan’s *InTune* magazine says: “When it comes to clarity, flawless tempo selection, phrasing and precise control of timbre, Buechner has no superior.”

She was the Gold Medalist of the 1984 Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition, and a Bronze Medalist in the 1986 Tchaikowsky International Piano Competition in Moscow.

With an active repertoire of more than 100 piano concertos ranging from A (Albeníz) to Z (Zimbalist) -- possibly the largest of any living concert pianist -- she has been soloist with many of the world’s prominent orchestras, and given recitals at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center and the Hollywood Bowl. Ms. Buechner enjoys wide success throughout Asia where she tours annually.

Sara Davis Buechner is the most prominent transgender musician appearing on the classical concert stage today. She received the Eleanor Roosevelt Award of Brandeis University, and is a member of the National Museum of Women in the Arts. She often presents talks and workshops to LGBTQIA+ groups, and has received praise for her solo autobiographical theater show “Of Pigs and Pianos,” which premièred at New York City’s TheaterLab in 2021 to rave reviews.

Dr. Buechner is a Professor of Music at Temple University, has taught and given master classes at prominent music institutions worldwide, and has edited important piano collections for Dover Publications. Her own compositions are published by Muse Press of Tokyo. In 2022 she marked her 35th year as a dedicated Yamaha artist.

I first met Gerhardt Zimmermann in the spring of 1978. He had come to audition young pianists at Juilliard, for the summer series of the Saint Louis Pops. I was 18 years old. Of all things, I offered the obscure and obscenely difficult Piano Concerto in F minor of Adolf von Henselt, a Romantic composer in the mold of Liszt and Schumann. I loved the ridiculous cascades of show-off octaves in that work, and so did young Gerhardt, moustache and all. We had a great time playing the piece that summer.

He was my best friend and staunchest champion from that point forward, engaging me regularly wherever he conducted and sticking with me through youth, middle age, gender change and anything and everything -- even my continual exhortations to him to re-grow that moustache.

There was one particularly touching evening after playing Rachmaninoff in Raleigh, I believe, when we sat together in his dressing room, hot and exhausted. We always gave those performances our all. Gesturing to his legs, he said to me: "You and I, dear friend, we have conquered a lot." This was a man who understood profound challenges, and the power of music to surmount and transcend them. It was our unspoken personal bond, which I will forever cherish.

He was the sincerest of musicians, the sweetest of men, and the truest of friends. Of what higher can one say of a human being.