

The Biggest Losers

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) – *Trio Sonata in E minor, BWV 528*

Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979) – *Piano Trio*

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) – *Piano Trio in A minor*

Who wins competitions and why? How do composers' reputations change over time? So many of the composers we think of today as wildly successful faced tremendous failure during their lifetimes. **J.S. Bach** was rejected from multiple positions and struggled to free himself from smothering job contracts, in one case resulting in his imprisonment. At the time of his death, his music was considered old-fashioned. **Ravel** entered the prestigious Prix de Rome competition over five consecutive years, but never won. His final loss resulted in a public scandal and investigation. British-born composer **Rebecca Clarke** contended with misogyny and competition losses, yet managed to achieve significant recognition at the height of her career, becoming relatively unknown only later in life. She is just now taking her rightful place among history's great composers.

This program begins with an example of the earliest "piano trio"- the Trio Sonata in E minor, originally written for organ, by **J.S. Bach**. **Clarke's** deeply moving 1921 trio and **Ravel's** thrilling 1914 trio are inspired by an earlier age, but reflect the tumult, dreams, and hopes of the early 20th century. Today these three winning works bely the struggles these composers faced in their careers.