



What we talk about when we talk about math



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In 1864, the mathematician J. J. Sylvester wrote: “May not Music be described as the Mathematics of the sense, Mathematics as Music of the reason?... Thus the musician feels Mathematics, the mathematician thinks Music—Music the dream, Mathematics the working life.”

A connection between mathematics and music has been sensed by many people. But one difference stands out: we can go to a concert and enjoy hearing the most intricate details of a string quartet, even if we can't play a note ourselves. But the beauty of intricate mathematics remains stubbornly difficult to communicate. How can we share mathematics with the freedom and inclusivity that we share music? Can we share the dream rather than the working life? This event will be an experiment in sharing what it feels like to do mathematics, a concert of impressions and sensations, open to everyone.

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Registration is required to access the Zoom webinar.
Please register at z.umn.edu/IMAPublicLectureJanuary
For more information visit www.ima.umn.edu

Lillian Pierce grew up in a home filled with music. She began her study of mathematics in earnest at Princeton, where she graduated as valedictorian. After studying in Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, she returned to Princeton for her PhD, and then took up fellowships at the Institute for Advanced Study, the University of Oxford, and the Hausdorff Center for Mathematics in Bonn, before moving to Duke University. Her work has received an NSF CAREER grant, a Sloan Research Fellowship, an AWM-Sadosky Prize, a Joan and Joseph Birman Fellowship, and a Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers. Pierce is currently the Nicholas J. and Theresa M. Leonardy Professor of Mathematics at Duke University, a Bonn Research Fellow, and a Fellow of the American Mathematical Society.

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