It’s exciting to see and hear students discover themselves, and struggle with unfamiliar works: Lesser urges them to play modern and peer-written compositions. Classical musicians, himself included, too often “box themselves into a certain pre-defined area that doesn’t sound like it’s going to grow—and it is growing,” he reports. “People and composers are always dreaming up something that someone else hasn’t done—because that’s what they do. To think of classical music as only Beethoven’s Fifth is unfair. If I don’t insist it has to be what it always was, I have great optimism,” for the future of the art form, he adds, “because people will always want to express themselves.”

In Helsinki, both Cho and Petrin reached the final round. (Jury members were not allowed to discuss or vote for their own students.) Cho played the Prokofiev piece last, and won. “He sounded very free and emotional,” says Lesser, with pleasure. “I think the excitement of the moment lent something to it that was very special. The judges all just said ‘Bravo,’ and when the vote came, there was no question about the outcome.”

New music is always a challenge—for Cho, because he’s still young, and for Lesser because “my brain is old, my fingers are old.” But Ernest Bloch’s “Schelomo”? Beethoven? J.S. Bach? Lesser has played those pieces his entire life, and not long ago, recorded the complete Bach cello suites and Beethoven sonatas. “But that music? You’re never satisfied covering themselves, and struggle with unfamil- iar works: Lesser urges them to play modern and peer-written compositions. Classical musicians, himself included, too often “box themselves into a certain pre-defined area that doesn’t sound like it’s going to grow—and it is growing,” he reports. “People and composers are always dreaming up something that someone else hasn’t done—because that’s what they do. To think of classical music as only Beethoven’s Fifth is unfair. If I don’t insist it has to be what it always was, I have great optimism,” for the future of the art form, he adds, “because people will always want to express themselves.”

In Helsinki, both Cho and Petrin reached the final round. (Jury members were not allowed to discuss or vote for their own students.) Cho played the Prokofiev piece last, and won. “He sounded very free and emotional,” says Lesser, with pleasure. “I think the excitement of the moment lent something to it that was very special. The judges all just said ‘Bravo,’ and when the vote came, there was no question about the outcome.”

People attend arts events “because they’re thinking about that to get him to find out: what does he stand that they are there to share a vision or have to be perfect—and I think they should do with it. So, it doesn’t matter if you’re a cellist or a kazoo player.”

What’s required of a cellist? Lesser re-frames the question: “What does it take to be distinctive in anything? You have to master your craft, but you also have to have something to do with it. So, it doesn’t matter if you’re a cellist or a kazoo player.”

People attend arts events “because they’re hoping to get something that they don’t have,” he says. Too many young people these days think they’re being judged, so they have to be perfect—and I think they should try to be,” he acknowledges. “But the most important thing is that they have to understand that they are there to share a vision or a feeling with somebody who is interested in knowing about that.”

Cho, he says, is “an amazing instrumentalist. In my work with him, I am trying build on that to get him to find out: what does he want to do with that?” Petrin, whose Helsinki repertoire included Shostakovich’s less well-known, but demanding, second concerto, is also an exemplary musician, Lesser notes, with “very, very deep feeling, very warm and communicative—but we’re working to give his listeners more ‘fun,’ along with the seriousness.” There, the goal is helping him build a bridge from the internal to the external world.

The Senate tilts red, the House blue for Harvard degree-program alumni or matriculants in the 116th Congress. The GOP roster now has eight senators (up two) and six representatives (down one); across the aisle are six senators (down from two) and 32 representatives (up 3). As- terniks mark the newcomers.

**Senate Republicans:** Michael Braun, M.B.A. ’78 (Ind.); Tom Cotton ’99, J.D. ’02 (Ark.); Michael D. Crapo, J.D. ’77 (Id.); Rafael Edward “Ted” Cruz, J.D. ’95 (Tex.); Mitt Romney, J.D.-M.B.A. ’75 (Utah); Ben Sasse ’94 (Neb.); Daniel S. Sullivan ’87 (Alas.); Pat Toomey ’84 (Pa.)

**Senate Democrats:** Richard Blumenthal ’67 (Conn.); Timothy M. Kaine, J.D. ’83 (Va.); John F. (Jack) Reed, M.P.P. ’73, J.D. ’82 (R.I.); Charles E. Schumer ’71, J.D. ’74 (N.Y.); Christopher Van Hollen Jr., M.P.P. ’85 (Md.); Mark R. Warner, J.D. ’80 (Va.)

**House Republicans:** Dan Crenshaw, M.P.A. ’17; Brian Mast, A.L.B. ’16 ( Fla.); John Mooonernaar, M.P.A. ’89 (Mich.); Elise Stefanik ’06 (N.Y.); Van Taylor ’96, M.B.A. ’01 (Tex.); Steve Watkins, M.P.A. ’17 (Kan.)

**House Democrats:** Brendan Boyle, M.P.P. ’05 (Pa.); Anthony G. Brown ’84 (Md.); Joaquin Castro, J.D. ’00 (Tex.); Katherine Clark, M.P.A. ’97 (Mass); Gerry Connolly, M.P.A. ’79 (Va.); James H. Cooper, J.D. ’80 (Tenn.); Antonio Delgado, J.D. ’05 (N.Y.); Bill Foster, Ph.D. ’83 (Ill.); Ruben Gallego ’02/04 (Ariz.); John Garamendi, M.B.A. ’70 ( Calif.); J osh Gottheimer, J.D. ’04 (N.J.); Josh Harder, M.B.A.-M.P.P. ’14 (Calif.); Brian Higgins, M.P.A. ’96 (N.Y.); Jim Himes ’88 (Conn.); Joseph P. Kennedy III, J.D. ’09 (Mass); Ron Kind ’85 (Wisc.); Raja Krishnamoorthi, J.D. ’00 (Ill.); James R. Langevin, M.P.A. ’94 (R.I.); Andy Levin, J.D. ’94 (Mich.); Stephen F. Lynch, M.P.A. ’99 (Mass.); Seth Moulton ’01, M.B.A.-M.P.P. ’11 (Mass.); Chris Pappas ’02 (N.H.); Katie Porter, J.D. ’01 ( Calif.); Jamie Raskin ’83, J.D. ’87 (Md.); Raoul Ruiz, M.D.-M.P.P. ’01, M.P.H. ’07 ( Calif.); John P. Sarbanes, J.D. ’88 ( Md.); Adam B. Schiff, J.D. ’85 ( Calif.); Robert C. Scott ’69 (Va.); Terri Sewell, J.D. ’92 (Ala.); Bradley J. Sherman, J.D. ’79 ( Calif.); Mark Takano ’83 ( Calif.); Juan C. Vargas, J.D. ’91 ( Calif.)