



WASHINGTON
PERFORMING ARTS

2023-24 SEASON

Photo by Lisa-Marie Mazzeo and Rob Davidson



SIMONE
DINNERSTEIN
& AWADAGIN
PRATT

PIANO

MONDAY, October 30, 2023 / 7:30 p.m.

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Terrace Theater

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PRATT
PIANO

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This performance is presented by Washington Performing Arts, in cooperation with the Coalition for African Americans in the Performing Arts.

PROGRAM

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig, BWV 1085

[1685-1750]

ARR. GYÖRGY KURTÁG

[b. 1926]

PĒTERIS VASKS

[b.1946]

Castillo Interior

Awadagin Pratt, piano

PHILIP GLASS

[b. 1937]

Etude No. 6

Simone Dinnerstein, piano

FRANZ SCHUBERT

[1797-1828]

Fantasy in F Minor for Piano Four-Hands, D. 940

Allegretto molto moderato

Largo

Allegro vivace

Tempo I

Intermission

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

[1770-1827]

Symphony No. 6 in F Major, op. 68

(“Pastorale”)

ARR. SELMAR BAGGE

[1823-1896]

Awakening of Cheerful Feelings upon Arrival

in the Country: Allegro ma non troppo

Scene by the Brook: Andante molto moto

Merry Gathering of Country Folk: Allegro

Thunderstorm: Allegro

Shepherd’s Song: Happy and Thankful

Feelings after the Storm: Allegretto

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Photo by Lisa-Marie Mazzucco



Simone Dinnerstein, piano

American pianist Simone Dinnerstein has a distinctive musical voice.

She first came to wider public attention through her recording of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, reflecting an aesthetic that was both deeply rooted in the score and profoundly idiosyncratic. She is, wrote *The New York Times*, "a unique voice in the forest of Bach interpretation."

Dinnerstein has played with orchestras ranging from the New York Philharmonic and Montreal Symphony Orchestra to the London Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale Rai. During the pandemic she recorded three albums which form a trilogy: *A Character of Quiet*, *An American Mosaic*, and *Undersong*. *An American Mosaic* was nominated for a Grammy.

The Washington Post comments, "it is Dinnerstein's unreserved identification with every note she plays that makes her performance so spellbinding." In a world where music is everywhere, she hopes that it can still be transformative.

Simone Dinnerstein appears by arrangement with IMG Artists, 7 West 54th Street, New York, NY 10019. Tel: (212) 994-3500

For more information please visit www.simonedinnerstein.com

Photo by Rob Davidson



Awadagin Pratt, piano

Pianist Awadagin Pratt is acclaimed for his musical insight and intensely

evolving performances. Pratt studied at the Peabody Conservatory of Music where he was the first student to ever receive diplomas in piano, violin, and conducting. He won the Naumburg International Piano Competition and was awarded an Avery Fisher Career Grant.

Pratt joined the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music as Professor of Piano in July of 2023, and is the Artistic Director of the Art of Piano Festival. Through the Art of Piano Foundation, he commissioned seven composers, including Jessie Montgomery, to compose works for piano and string orchestra. By the end of the 2023-24 season, he will have performed Ms. Montgomery's concerto with over 30 U.S. orchestras including the Boston, Chicago, St. Louis, and Baltimore Symphony orchestras.

Awadagin Pratt appears courtesy of CM Artists New York, 127 West 96th St. #13B, NY, NY 10025 (212) 864-1005

PROGRAM NOTES

O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig, BWV 1085

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

arr. György Kurtág (b. 1926)

Program note by Eric Bromberger

As a devout Lutheran, Bach took very seriously Martin Luther's call for music (and a language) available to all members of the congregation. In the effort to reach the common man and make religion more immediate and meaningful, the music of the Lutheran service was built not on the Latin of the Roman Catholic Church — chanted by the priest — but on the simple and sturdy hymn tunes of Germany (some of them by Martin Luther himself), which could be sung by all the members of a congregation. Bach was drawn to these old German chorale melodies throughout his career: he wrote cantatas based on chorale tunes, he included chorales in his passions, he composed about thirty new chorale tunes of his own, and he also made about 400 reharmonizations of existing chorale tunes, usually for solo organ.

Pianists have been irresistibly attracted to this noble music, and many — including Johannes Brahms, Ferruccio Busoni, Wilhelm Kempff, Myra Hess, and many more — have arranged Bach's organ chorales for solo piano. Hungarian composer György Kurtág also felt the pull of this music, and in 1985 he arranged several of Bach's organ chorales for piano, including transcriptions for solo piano, as well as for piano four- and six-hands.

The old Lutheran hymn *O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig* ("O lamb of God,

innocent") appears to be the work (both text and music) of Nikolaus Delcius, a 16th-century German monk and composer. Bach was strongly drawn to this hymn: he used it in the first movement of the *Saint Matthew Passion*, and he also wrote several chorale preludes on it.

Castillo Interior

Pēteris Vasks (b. 1946)

Program note by Awadagin Pratt

Castillo Interior for solo piano is part of the commissioning project *Stillpoint* where Awadagin Pratt asked six composers to write music taking inspiration from five lines from the Four Quartets of T.S. Eliot.

Pēteris Vasks chose to transcribe his piece *Castillo Interior for Violin and Cello*, written in 2013, for solo piano. The title refers to Vasks's musical depiction of "The Interior Castle," the 1577 text by the Spanish Carmelite nun and Christian mystic St. Teresa of Avila. Her prose proves to be a formidable counterpoint to Eliot's poetry, as both challenge listeners to reflect on the dwellings of our interior lives and how we connect across the expanse of humanity (and perhaps beyond) and in Pratt's own words, "serves as a great expression of an aspirational quality of life."

Etude No. 6

Philip Glass (b. 1937)

Program note by Eric Bromberger

In the late 1980s, Philip Glass realized that he needed to improve

his piano technique, and so he began to compose a series of etudes for his own instruction — he said that he wrote these pieces “to explore a variety of tempi, textures, and piano techniques.” But like the best etudes, Glass’s etudes rise above their purely pedagogical purposes to become good music in their own right, expressive, and memorable. Glass has commented that he feels that the 20 etudes, taken as a whole, form “a self-portrait.”

Etude No. 6 was originally commissioned by radio station WNYC under the title “Now So Long After That Time.” This etude is set at a fast pace (quarter-note equals 132), and the principal theme emerges gradually from the opening eighth-note oscillation. This is treated to a dramatic development, with the pianist extended to the far extremes of the keyboard.

Fantasy in F Minor for Piano Four-Hands, D. 940

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Program note by Eric Bromberger

The *Fantasy in F Minor for Piano Four-Hands* is one of the creations of Schubert’s miraculous final year of life, which saw a nearly unbroken rush of masterpieces. Schubert wrote most of the *Fantasy* in January 1828 but ran into problems and set the work aside for several months, returning to complete it in April. He and his friend Eduard von Bauernfeld gave the first performance on May 9 of that year, six months before the composer’s death at age 31.

The *Fantasy in F Minor* demands first-class performers and contains some of the most wrenching and focused music Schubert ever wrote. Schubert

scholar John Reed has gone so far as to call it “a work which in its structural organization, economy of form, and emotional depth represents his art at its peak.” The title “fantasia” suggests a certain looseness of form, but the *Fantasy in F Minor* is extraordinary for its conciseness. Lasting barely a quarter of an hour, it is in one continuous flow of music that breaks into four clear movements.

The very beginning — *Allegretto molto moderato* — is haunting. Over murmuring accompaniment, the higher voice lays out the wistful first theme, whose halting rhythms and chirping grace notes have caused many to believe that this theme had its origins in Hungarian folk music. Schubert repeats this theme continually — the effect is almost hypnotic — and suddenly the music has slipped effortlessly from F minor into F major. The second subject, based on firm dotted rhythms, is treated at length before the music drives directly into the powerful *Largo*, which is given an almost baroque luxuriance by its trills and double (and triple) dotting. This in turn moves directly into the *Allegro vivace*, a sparkling scherzo that feels like a very fast waltz; its trio section (marked *con delicatezza*) ripples along happily in D major. The final section (Schubert marks it simply *Tempo I*) brings back music from the very beginning, but quickly the wistful opening melody is jostled aside by a vigorous fugue derived from the second subject of the opening section. On tremendous chords and contrapuntal complexity, the *Fantasy* drives to its climax, only to fall away to a quiet close.

Symphony No. 6 in F Major, op. 68 ("Pastorale")

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
arr. Selmar Bagge (1823-1896)
Program note by Eric Bromberger

After making sketches for several years, Beethoven composed his *Symphony No. 6* during the summer of 1808, and it was first performed at the Theater an der Wien on December 22 of that year. *Symphony No. 6* is unique among Beethoven's symphonies because it appears to be program music. Beethoven himself gave it the nickname "Pastorale" and further headed each movement with a descriptive title that seems to tell a "story:" the arrival in the country, impressions beside a brook, a peasants' dance which is interrupted by a thunderstorm, and a concluding hymn of thanksgiving once the storm has passed. The *Sixth* may lack the stark drama and tension of such predecessors as the *Eroica* or the *Fifth*, but it depends on the same use of sonata form for its musical argument, and finally it aims for the same feeling of transcendence those earlier works achieved, even if — as Joseph Kerman has wryly noted — all that is being transcended here is the weather.

Beethoven liked to get out of Vienna during the stifling summer months and would take rooms in a rural village. A journal entry from 1815, seven years after the *Pastorale*, suggests his feelings: "The Almighty in the woods! I am happy, blessed in the forests." This symphony seems similarly blessed. Its first movement ("Cheerful impressions on arriving in the country") is built on two completely relaxed themes; these do not offer the contrast that lies at the heart of sonata form, but instead create two complementary

"Cheerful impressions."

The second movement — "Scene by the Brook" — is also in a sonata form built on two themes. The title "Scene" may imply dramatic action, but there is none here. Over murmuring lower strings, with their suggestion of bubbling water, the two themes sing gracefully. The movement concludes with three brief bird calls, which Beethoven names specifically in the score: nightingale (flute), quail (oboe), and cuckoo (clarinet).

The *scherzo* ("Peasants's merrymaking") is a portrait of a rural festival; its vigorous trio echoes the heavy stamping of a peasant dance. But just as the *scherzo* is about to resume, it suddenly veers off in a new direction. Tremulous murmurings lead to the wonderful storm, which remains — two centuries after its composition — the best musical depiction ever of a thunderstorm, with great crashes of thunder and lightning flashing downward.

Gradually the storm moves off, and the music proceeds directly into the main theme of the final movement. If ever there has been music that deserved to be called radiant, it is this singing theme, which unfolds like a rainbow spread across the still-glistening heavens. The finale is a moderately-paced rondo [Beethoven's marking is *Allegretto*]. Along the way appear secondary themes that once again complement rather than conflict with the mood of the rondo theme, and the symphony concludes in this atmosphere of serenity.

Beethoven's *Sixth Symphony* is heard at this concert in an arrangement for two pianos made in 1876 by the German composer and writer about music Selmar Bagge.

ABOUT WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS

One of the most established and honored performing arts institutions in America, Washington Performing Arts has engaged for more than half a century with artists, audiences, students, and civic life. The city is truly our stage: for decades, in venues ranging from concert halls and clubs to public parks, we have presented a tremendous range of artists and art forms, from the most distinguished symphony orchestras to both renowned and emerging artists in classical music, gospel music, jazz, international genres, and more. Washington Performing Arts also has an ever-expanding artistic and educational presence on the internet, addressing the programming challenges of this time of pandemic while envisioning ongoing opportunities for online connection and community in a post-COVID world.

Washington Performing Arts deeply values its partnerships with local organizations and other arts institutions. Through events online and in a myriad of performance venues and neighborhoods, Washington Performing Arts engages international visiting artists in community programs and introduces local artists to wider audiences. We place a premium on establishing artists as a continuing presence in the lives of both young people and adults through residencies and education programs.

For its achievements, Washington Performing Arts has been recognized with a National Medal of Arts and with three Mayor's Arts Awards from the D.C. Government. We have now embarked upon our second half-century, ever inspired by the motto of our founder, Patrick Hayes: "Everybody in, nobody out."

For more information, please visit WashingtonPerformingArts.org



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2023-24 SEASON

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Special thanks: Dallas Morse Coors Foundation for the Performing Arts, Susan S. Angell

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Church
Washington Performing Arts
Women's Committee

THE RUTH BADER GINSBURG MEMORIAL FUND

The Ruth Bader Ginsburg Memorial Fund was established in 2021 to honor the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's life, legacy, and passion for music with an annual award to a distinguished artist that includes the opportunity to choose a musical talent deserving of wider recognition to be presented in a Washington Performing Arts recital in Justice Ginsburg's memory.

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Paul Schiff Berman
Jenny Bilfield and Joel Phillip
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Marian and Milton Carr
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Miriam Steinberg-Egeth
Héctor J. Torres and Jay
Haddock Ortiz
Nina Totenberg and David
Reines
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Meiyu Tsung and Curtis Chang
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Rebekah and Mark Wasserman
Christie-Anne and Jeffrey P.
Weiss
Philip R. West and Barbara
Yellen
Mr. and Mrs. Douglas H.
Wheeler
Jonathan and Ruby Zhu

As of September 1, 2023

THE REGGIE AWARD

“The Reggie” is an annual award established in 2018 to honor former Washington Performing Arts Board Chair Reginald Van Lee, granted to a high school junior or senior member of the Washington Performing Arts Children of the Gospel Choir to pursue additional arts-related education or activities.

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Jenny Bilfield and
Joel Phillip Friedman
Francesca Britton
Nicholas A. Brown
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Dan Cameron Family
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André Coleman
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Mike and Luanne Gutermuth
Susan B. Hepner

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Dennis Hoffmann
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Shebbie and William Rice
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James J. Sandman and
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Ami Scott and Lucius Outlaw
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Peter Shields and Ace Werner
Ruth and Arne⁺ Sorenson
Kerrien Suarez
Ebony Thomas
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Women’s Committee
Njambi and Earl Wynn
As of September 1, 2023

For more information about Washington Performing Arts’s endowed fund opportunities, contact Meiyu Tsung at MTsung@WashingtonPerformingArts.org.

WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS LEGACY SOCIETY

Legacy Society members appreciate the vital role that performing arts play in the community, as well as in their own lives. By remembering Washington Performing Arts in their will or estate plans, members enhance our annual fund, endowment, or donor-designated programs and help make it possible for the next generations to enjoy the same quality and diversity of presentations both on stages and in our schools and community.

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