WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS

2024/25 SEASON

Hayes Piano Series

JANICE CARISSA

Piano

Sunday, May 18, 2025 / 2:00 p.m.

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

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PROGRAM

This performance is approximately 2 hours, including a 15-minute intermission.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
(1685-1750)

Partita No. 2 in C Minor, BWV 826

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
(1770-1827)

Piano Sonata No. 8 in C Minor, op. 13, "*Pathétique*"

Grave: Allegro molto e con brio
Adagio cantabile
Rondo: Allegro

FREDERIC RZEWSKI
(1938-2021)

Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues

INTERMISSION

SERGEI PROKOFIEV
(1891-1953)

Sonata No. 8 in B-Flat Major, op. 84

Andante dolce
Andante sognando
Vivace

Linger Longer

Join us immediately following the performance for a Q&A with the artist.

This event is an external rental presented in coordination with the Kennedy Center Campus Rentals Office and is not produced by the Kennedy Center.

MEET THE ARTIST

Photo by Chris McGuire

JANICE CARISSA, piano

A Gilmore Young Artist and winner of Salon de Virtuosi, Janice Carissa has "the multicolored highlights of a mature pianist" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*) and "strong, sure hands" (*Voice of America*) that "convey a vivid story rather than a mere showpiece" (*Chicago Classical Review*). Her artistry has been showcased at an array of renowned venues, including the Sydney Opera House, Carnegie Hall, United Nations Headquarters, Kennedy Center, Millennium Park, Louis Vuitton Foundation, and Saratoga Performing Arts Center.

Following her Philadelphia Orchestra debut at age 16, Carissa has substituted for André Watts as soloist with Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and gone on to perform with the Kansas City, Des Moines, and Tacoma Symphonies, Sacramento Philharmonic, and ProMusica Chamber Orchestra, among others.

A pupil of Gary Graffman and Robert McDonald, Carissa left Indonesia in 2013 and entered the Curtis Institute of Music with full scholarship from Gerry and Marguerite Lenfest. She went on to earn a Master of Music at The Juilliard School where she studied with Robert McDonald. When away from the piano, Carissa is an avid foodie and loves going on strolls with her camera.

PROGRAM NOTES

Partita No. 2 in C Minor, BWV 826
JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
Born March 31, 1685, Eisenach
Died July 28, 1750, Leipzig

Bach's set of six partitas, originally written for harpsichord, were composed between 1726 and 1731 and published in the latter year as the first volume of his *Clavier-Übung* ("Keyboard Practice"). In a wonderful introductory note in the score, the composer described these works as having been "Composed for music Lovers, to refresh their Spirits, by Johann Sebastian Bach." Bach understood the partita to be a suite of dance movements—its name implies a set of "parts"—based on the traditional sequence of allemande-courante-sarabande-gigue. He adopted this tradition but made it his own by supplementing it with three of what he called "galanteries:" extra movements, somewhat lighter in character and intended to make the work more attractive to listeners. These consisted of an introductory movement (in a different form in each of the six partitas) and two extra dance movements.

The Partita No. 2 in C Minor comes from 1727, when Bach was also working on his *St. Matthew Passion*. It opens with an imposing sinfonia in three parts: the opening Grave is built on steadily-dotted rhythms, the Andante moves easily above a walking baseline, and the concluding section is a spirited fugue. The partita's C-minor tonality gives the Allemande, Courante, and *Sarabande* a wistful, dark cast, and Bach keeps the tempo restrained in these movements as well. The interpolated movement here is a Rondeaux in 3/8, athletic and poised, and then Bach springs a surprise: he drops the expected Gigue and in its place concludes with a brilliant Capriccio in binary form.

Piano Sonata No. 8 in C Minor, op. 13, "*Pathétique*"
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
Born December 17, 1770, Bonn
Died March 26, 1827, Vienna

It was, quite unusually, Beethoven himself who contributed the famous nickname for this sonata: when it was published in Vienna on December 18,

1799, (two days after his 29th birthday) he called it *Grande sonate pathétique*. Beethoven understood *Pathétique* to mean intense or emotional, and those qualities saturate this powerful music, sometimes in quite different ways. Beethoven's choice of key for this music is crucial: C minor was the key he turned to for his darkest and most dramatic music, and it would later be the key of the Symphony No. 5, Overture Coriolan, Op. 62, and the Funeral March of the Symphony No.3, *"Eroica"*. By 1799, Beethoven had already composed a piano trio, piano sonata, string trio, and string quartet in C minor, and while those are all firm-ribbed works, none of them approaches the stark power of *Pathétique Sonata*, the earliest great manifestation of Beethoven's "C-minor mood."

Beyond its emotional power, this music is remarkable for the young composer's experiments with form. The Pathétique opens with a slow introduction (his first in a piano sonata) marked *Grave*, an indication of solemn import as well as slow speed. The powerful chordal writing leads to a sudden plummet down a run of 128th notes into the main body of the movement, marked *Molto allegro e con brio*. The materials here are simple. The opening theme is essentially a run up the C-minor scale, and Beethoven sets the music at a quiet dynamic-but into these simple elements Beethoven fuses vast power, and soon this music is rushing forward with a furious energy. The second subject, fleet and singing, is decorated with mordents, and all might seem set for what would be simply an unusually powerful opening movement, but Beethoven continues to spring surprises. At just the point the development should begin, the music comes to a stop, and back, in all their dark strength, come the imposing chords of the Grave introduction. Only then does Beethoven allow the development to proceed; this is climaxed by some remarkable harmonic progressions, and Beethoven brings back a reminiscence of the Grave introduction before the 12-measure coda hurls the movement to a close.

The Adagio cantabile is built on a gorgeous melody—it has become almost too popular—and Beethoven sets this movement in rondo form: this opening melody is twice interrupted by brief episodes, and at the end Beethoven combines the triplet accompaniment of the second of these with his main theme in a graceful fusion of material. The key of this movement, A-flat major, sounds particularly warm and comforting after the C-minor furies of the opening movement, and it is to C minor that Beethoven returns for his rondo-finale, marked simply *Allegro*. That key, however, does not sound nearly so dark or violent in this finale. There is almost a delicacy to this rondo theme, which may be explained by the fact that Beethoven had originally intended to use it in a violin sonata. One of the unusual features of this finale is its brevity. In fact, the movements grow steadily shorter as this sonata

proceeds: the Pathétique moves from a powerful nine-minute opening movement to a six-minute slow movement and concludes with a final rondo lasting barely four minutes. As a result, it feels heavily balanced to the front, and Beethoven was aware of this: when he wrote the Piano Sonata No. 14 *"Moonlight Sonata,"* two years later, he set out to move the dramatic weight from the first movement to the finale.

The Pathétique is one of Beethoven's most popular works, and this was true even in his own time. The pianist Ignaz Moscheles has left a wonderful account of the sonata's effect on young musicians of the era (Moscheles was 10 when the incident he describes here took place):

"It was about this time that I learnt from some school-fellows that a young composer had appeared at Vienna, who wrote the oddest stuff possible—such as no one could either play or understand; crazy music, in opposition to all rule; and that this composer's name was Beethoven. On repairing to the library to satisfy my curiosity as to this so-called genius, I found there Beethoven's *Sonata Pathétique*. This was in the year 1804. My pocket-money would not suffice for the purchase of it, so I secretly copied it. The novelty of its style was so attractive to me, and I became so enthusiastic in my admiration of it, that I forgot myself so far as to mention my new acquisition to my master, who reminded me of his injunction, and warned me not to play or study any eccentric production until I had based my style upon more solid models. Without, however, minding his injunctions, I seized upon the pianoforte works of Beethoven as they successively appeared, and in them found a solace and a delight such as no other composer afforded me."

Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues
FREDERIC RZEWSKI
Born April 13, 1938, Westfield, Massachusetts
Died June 26, 2021, Montiano, Italy

Frederic Rzewski studied with Walter Piston, Roger Sessions, and Milton Babbitt, then went to Italy, where he studied with Luigi Dallapiccola. Rzewski taught in Belgium, the Netherlands, London, and in the United States at Yale, Cal Arts, and the University of California at San Diego. A first-class pianist, Rzewski was animated throughout his career by a commitment to social justice, a passion that shaped much of his music. His *The People United Will Never be Defeated!*, a massive set of variations for piano on a Chilean protest song, has become a modern classic and has been frequently performed and recorded.

Rzewski composed his *Four North American Ballads* in 1978/79, and the last

of these, the *Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues*, has become a classic of its own. It was inspired by an account of a protest at a cotton mill in Winnsboro, South Carolina, during the 1930's when the mill's workers, reacting to the brutal conditions in that mill, began singing a blues song to protest their treatment. To dramatize that situation, Rzewski fashioned an extremely original piece of music, one that captures that conflict in sound without ever seeming to "tell" a story. One of the most impressive parts of this piece is his depiction of the mill itself, for the implacable rhythmic pound of the machines runs through the piece. Rzewski marks the beginning expressionless, machinelike, and from the first instant we are aware of the steady pound of heavy machinery, depicted by rapid tone-clusters, which are to be played by the pianist's forearm, flat of hand, and sometimes individual fingers. Just when we've been flattened by that mechanistic pounding comes a complete change. Rzewski breaks off and gives us the blues tune that was sung to battle that cacophony—he marks that tune *tranquillo*, *espressivo*, and it sings it haunting melody along a 12/8 meter. But the respite is short. Back comes the pound of the machines, slowly at first but soon with all its old menace, and it is on this rush of energy that the *Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues* comes to a surprising conclusion.

It goes without saying that this piece demands a nearly superhuman effort from the pianist, who must solve incredible rhythmic complexities and have the stamina to project the unending malice of the machines.

Sonata No. 8 in B-flat Major, op. 84
SERGEI PROKOFIEV
Born April 23, 1891, Sontsovka
Died March 5, 1953, Moscow

In 1939, Sergei Prokofiev planned and began to sketch three piano sonatas: his Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth. He completed the first of these the following year, but the other two took a great deal more time, and before he could finish them the Soviet Union had been plunged into war with Nazi Germany. He completed the Seventh in 1942, but the Eighth had to wait until the summer of 1944, five years after its initial conception. Prokofiev spent that summer at a composers' retreat at Ivanovo, 150 miles northeast of Moscow, working on two pieces: this sonata and his Fifth Symphony. The heroic symphony was to some extent inspired by the war ("I conceived it as a symphony of the greatness of the human spirit," said Prokofiev), but the relation between the sonata and the war is elusive. Some Soviet commentators claimed to hear the tread of soldiers and other martial sounds in this sonata, but that must

remain supposition. What we can say is that if Prokofiev's Eighth Sonata is in no sense programmatic, it is nevertheless a very serious and long-spanned work, and it is hard to feel that the distant war did not have an influence on this often somber music.

The Eighth Sonata is conceived on a large scale: a huge first movement (longer than the other two combined) is followed by a brief slow movement before concluding with a dynamic finale. Throughout, Prokofiev's performance markings provide unusual insight into the music's character. The sonata opens not with the expected fast movement but with a moderately-paced movement significantly marked *Andante dolce*. There is a wistful quality in the steady pace of the opening section, which proceeds through a series of variations on its two principal themes. The middle rushes ahead, but this is not violent music; instead, it is characterized by a nervous quality (Prokofiev marks it *inquieto*). The opening material returns at some length, and—after a brief reminiscence of the turbulent middle section—this massive movement concludes quietly.

Some relief is necessary at this point, and it comes in the second movement, also marked *Andante*, but now Prokofiev specifies *Andante sognando* ("dreamily"). Some commentators have called this movement, set in 3/4, a minuet, but it resolutely refuses to dance and remains subdued throughout; Prokofiev repeatedly reminds the pianist to play dolce and tranquillo. After the moderate pace of the first two movements, the *Vivace* rips to life on its 12/8 meter, and the nice spring of the opening theme animates much of the finale. There are quiet interludes along the way, including a return of material from the first movement, before the music drives to a powerful close that Prokofiev marks both *sonoramente* and *con brio*.

Emil Gilels gave the first performance of the Eighth Sonata in Moscow on December 29, 1944, two weeks before the premiere of the Fifth Symphony. The relation of the symphony—with its heroic, public character—to the war was quite clear (some even referred to it as a "Victory Symphony"). The Eighth Sonata may well register a reaction to the devastating war, but here Prokofiev speaks in much more somber, more personal terms.

Program notes by Eric Bromberger.

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Photo by LawreneeSumulong

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Monday, June 16, 2025 / 7:00 p.m.
Concert Hall

"A fanfare of trumpets was answered by a sheen of reeds before a froth of swapped phrases unfolded over springy walking-bas swing... Marsalis, a superb technician, welds classical jazz references into a modal jazz palette."

– Financial Times

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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."

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Jesse Goodman and Nicole Lurie
Cab and Susan Grayson
Ms. Felecia Love Greer
Andrea L. Grimaldi
Hannah Gross
Cassidy Grunninger
Ms. June Hajjar
Ms. Gertraud Hechl
Mr. Charles L. Holloway
The Randy Hostetler Living Room Music Fund
Lauren† and Glen Howard
Ms. Leonade D. Jones
Ms. Betsy Scott Kleeblatt
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Ms. Jean Perin
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Hunter and Elizabeth Rawlings
Cara Rhone
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Shebbie R. and William S. Rice, III
Ms. Patricia Richards
Hugo Rojo
Ms. Sara E. Sanders/Sanders Foundation
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Ms. Grace Shen
Dr. Margaret Simms and Dr. Charles Betsey
Mrs. Fera Simone
Catherine Snyderwine
Olivia Stam
Howard and Janice Stoodley
Dr. Wesley Delaine Thomas and Mr. Eric Jones
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Henry Valencia
Mr. Reginald Van Lee
Ms. Viviane M. Warren
Ms. Katherine Grayson Wilkins
Ms. Sandra Willen
Ms. Christina Witsberger
Kevin Yen and Tiffany Tsay

$600-$1,199

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David M. Bachman, M.D.
Janice Baker
Hon.† and Mrs. John W. Barnum
Dr. and Mrs. E. DeVaughn Belton
Riyhana Bey and Ellington Robinson
Chris Bird
Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Bonds
Kathleen Buhle
Ms. Toni Bush
Mr. and Mrs. Guy F. Campbell
Mr. and Mrs. Irwin Chapman
Drs. Judith and Thomas Chused
Jayne E. Delaney
Mr. Andrew Dibble
Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Eagle
Danielle Heyman Feist
James Feldman and Natalie Wexler
Linda Foinding
Ms. Barbara Gold
Dr. Robert J. Gottschall and Ms. Yukiko Tani
Paul Gourdin and Joanne Weiss
Mr. David M. Gray
Mr. and Mrs. Mark Greenwold
Jack E. Hairston Jr.
Miss Deidre Veronica Hill
Carol and Albert Hunt
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Dr. J. Stephen and Mrs. Kathryn Jones
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Erna and Michael Kerst
Angela King Thompson
Matt Korn and Cindy Miller
Simeon M. Kriesberg† and Martha L. Kahn
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James and Sandra Lafond
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Ms. Robin Leeds
Laura London
Ms. Wendy Luke
Carmini Luther
Mr. Daniel Marcus and Dr. Maeva Marcus
Patrick D. McCoy, *in honor of Jenny Bilfield*
Mr. and Mrs. Rufus W. McKinney
Ms. Elizabeth McKune
Wesley Meekins and Hannah Church
Virginia C. Moseley and Thomas R. Nides
Nicholas Netchvolodoff
Wendy Orent
Mark Orr
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Kayla Payne
Robert Peirce and Sharon Harroun
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John Rupp and Charlotte Goodman
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Wolfgang and Carol Wawersik
Ms. Raleigh Wheeler
Collin White
Sandy and Helen Wilkes
James Beller and Christopher Wolf
Mr. James Yap
Paul Yarowsky and Kathryn Grumbach

† *deceased*

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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Linda Fienberg and Jeffrey Bauman
Carole and Henry Berman
Paul Schiff Berman
Jenny Bilfield and Joel Phillip Friedman
Barbara Broidy
Mr.† and Mrs. Calvin Cafritz
Henry Cao
Dr. and Mrs. Abe Cherrick
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Chris Conte
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KLMorris
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Miriam Steinberg-Egeth
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Nina Totenberg and David Reines
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Meiyu Tsung and Curtis Chang
Mary Jo Veverka
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

† deceased

As of January 1, 2025

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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Frederica† and Ulric† Weil
Douglas and Catherine Wheeler
Mr.† and Mrs. Robert H. Winter
Washington Performing Arts Women's Committee
Margaret S. Wu
In memory of Y. H. and T. F. Wu

† deceased

As of January 15, 2025

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