

Special Event

Simone Dinnerstein

—◆◆◆—
Thursday, January 23, 8:00 p.m.
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Please note that photography and the use of recording devices are not permitted. Remember to turn off all cellular phones and pagers before tonight's performance begins. Miller Theatre is wheelchair accessible. Large print programs are available upon request. For more information or to arrange accommodations, please call 212-854-7799.

Special Event

Simone Dinnerstein

Thursday, January 23, 8:00 p.m.



Two-Part Inventions for keyboard, BWV 772-786 J. S. Bach (1685 - 1750)

You Can't Get There From Here (2012) Nico Muhly (b. 1981)

New York premiere

INTERMISSION

Eine Kleine Mitternachtmusik George Crumb (b. 1929)

(Ruminations on *'Round Midnight* by Thelonius Monk) (2001)

Piano Sonata No. 32 in C minor, Opus 111 Beethoven (1770 - 1827)



This program runs approximately one hour and forty-five minutes including intermission.

About the Program

This is a program that explores time and counterpoint.

Bach's 15 Two-Part Inventions are pieces that he wrote in 1723 as a guide for keyboard players. It shows how to play counterpoint, beginning with two voices, one in each hand. The first note played is middle C and from that note on, Bach introduces us to techniques such as one voice imitating the other, or inverting what the other voice just played (essentially playing it upside down), or harmonizing in parallel motion. He shows what types of musical ideas best suit different treatments, how a melody can be broken into fragments and built up again. And in his preface he wrote that one of the most important lessons was for the keyboard player to learn how to play in a *cantabile* style, which means to make the machine of the keyboard sound like a human voice. How does the keyboard player do this? Amongst many ways, by feeling a physical distance between the notes, the way one feels when one reaches for a note to sing. By feeling the rhythm as being flexible, never fully rooted on the downbeat, but dancing agogically, giving a rhythmic shape as well as a melodic one, the player can achieve a *cantabile* sound.

Nico Muhly based *You Can't Get There From Here* on fragments from the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, which is a collection of music by early English composers written two generations before Bach. Muhly's music is very much about motives that are repeated and evolve, changing harmonic shape and rhythmic emphasis. Sometimes the music breaks away from meter entirely, allowing the performer free rein to play with the fragments. Counterpoint is explored in a section Muhly labels a "three-part exercise" midway through the work.

In *Eine Kleine Mitternachtmusik*, George Crumb takes keyboard counterpoint to another level and creates a small ensemble in the piano, requiring the pianist to manipulate multiple lines, each with a different keyboard technique. His use of the "extended" piano opens our ears to sounds that we may not have realized lay dormant in the instrument. There is a repeated rhythmic motive that is played by a mallet striking the crossbars. There are glissandi (like a harp) across the strings, and melodies plucked

by the finger tip and the finger nail. There is even a part for the pianist to shout while playing on the keys, creating harmonics within the piano and playing glissandi on the strings. Additionally, Crumb frequently writes sequences of motivic ideas, much in the same way that Bach did in his Inventions.

Beethoven's last piano sonata returns to Bach in its contrapuntal writing and the chorale-like arietta of the second movement. But the irregularity that is implicit in Bach's music is in plain view in Beethoven's. It is music that is moving beyond the constraints of tonality and rhythm. The tempo shifts constantly, eluding easy mathematical certainty, and the pulse of the variations mysteriously expands and contracts. It seems as though the music loses its center, trying to hang on to its Bachian formality but not able to confine itself to the rules of meter and counterpoint.

The sonata ends with strangely beautiful layers of sound created by a continuous trill surrounded by a melody and ostinato. Tonight I hear this as a counterpoint to the entire program – the multiple lines shown to us by Bach, the repetitive ostinato within a three-voice texture reminiscent of Muhly, the eerie trilling and layering reminiscent of Crumb. It spins off into the distance and then manages to find a way home, back to C.

Program notes by Simone Dinnerstein



About the Artist

American pianist **Simone Dinnerstein** is a searching and inventive artist who is motivated by a desire to find the musical core of every work she approaches. *NPR* reports, “She compels the listener to follow her in a journey of discovery filled with unscheduled detours . . . She’s actively listening to every note she plays, and the result is a wonderfully expressive interpretation.” The New York-based pianist gained an international following because of the remarkable success of her recording of Bach’s Goldberg Variations, which she raised the funds to record. Released in 2007 on Telarc, it ranked No. 1 on the U.S. Billboard Classical Chart in its first week of sales and was named to many “Best of 2007” lists including those of *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and *The New Yorker*.

The three solo albums Dinnerstein has released since then – *The Berlin Concert* (Telarc), *Bach: A Strange Beauty* (Sony), and *Something Almost Being Said* (Sony) – have also topped the classical charts. Dinnerstein was the bestselling instrumentalist of 2011 on the U.S. Billboard Classical Chart and was included in *NPR*’s 100 Favorite Songs of 2011 from all genres.

In spring 2013, Simone Dinnerstein and singer-songwriter Tift Merritt released an album together on Sony called *Night*, a unique collaboration uniting classical, folk, and rock worlds. Other upcoming and recent highlights include Dinnerstein’s debuts in Sydney and Melbourne; her debuts in Leipzig at the Gewandhaus and in Toulouse; the world premiere of Nico Muhly’s *You Can’t Get There From Here* at Symphony Hall in Boston; her third return engagement at the Berlin Philharmonie; and world premiere performances of Philip Lasser’s *The Circle and The Child* with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.

Dinnerstein’s performances have taken her around the world since her triumphant New York recital debut at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Hall in 2005, to venues including the Kennedy Center, Vienna Konzerthaus, Berlin Philharmonie, Metropolitan Museum, and Wigmore Hall; festivals including the Lincoln Center Mostly Mozart Festival, the Aspen, Verbier, and Ravinia festivals, and the Stuttgart Bach Festival;



and performances with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Dresden Philharmonic, Staatskapelle Berlin, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Czech Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Minnesota Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Orchestra of St. Luke's, Kristjan Järvi's Absolute Ensemble, Montreal Symphony Orchestra, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Danish National Symphony Orchestra, and the Tokyo Symphony. She returns to Miller Theatre after her successful 2012 solo recital, Bach and the Romantics.

Dinnerstein has played concerts throughout the U.S. for the Piatigorsky Foundation, an organization dedicated to bringing classical music to non-traditional venues. She gave the first classical music performance in the Louisiana state prison system when she played at the Avoyelles Correctional Center, and performed at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women in a concert organized by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. Dedicated to her community, in 2009 Dinnerstein founded Neighborhood Classics, a concert series open to the public hosted by New York public schools which raises funds for the schools.

Dinnerstein is a graduate of The Juilliard School where she was a student of Peter Serkin. She also studied with Solomon Mikowsky at the Manhattan School of Music and in London with Maria Curcio. Simone Dinnerstein lives in Brooklyn, New York with her husband and son. She is managed by IMG Artists and is a Sony Classical artist. www.simonedinnerstein.com



About Miller Theatre

Miller Theatre at Columbia University is the leading presenter of new music in New York City and one of the most vital forces nationwide for innovative programming. In partnership with Columbia University School of the Arts, Miller is dedicated to producing and presenting unique events, with a focus on contemporary and early music, jazz, opera, and multimedia performances. Founded in 1988, Miller has helped launch the careers of myriad composers and ensembles over the past 25 years, serving as an incubator for emerging artists and a champion of those not yet well known in the United States. A three-time recipient of the ASCAP/Chamber Music America Award for Adventurous Programming, Miller Theatre continues to meet the high expectations set forth by its founders—to present innovative programs, support the development of new work, and connect creative artists with adventurous audiences.

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Bach, Revisited

Miller Theatre's Bach series begins this February with a special anniversary twist: three extraordinary living composers, featured in past Composer Portraits concerts, return to curate a special evening pairing their music with favorite pieces of Bach. "Everyone has a very personal relationship to Johann Sebastian Bach's music," says Kaija Saariaho, who will begin the series this February. "That's the wonderful thing about it."

As part of the celebration of Miller Theatre's 25th Anniversary Season, *Bach, Revisited* blends Bach's universal resonance with the relationships central to Miller's innovative programming: collaborations with today's premiere artists. The series is curated by Saariaho, Joan Tower, and Steve Reich: composers who carry on Bach's legacy as they create powerful music for their time. "We have made Bach, Beethoven, Mozart iconic figures, which they certainly deserve," says Tower. "But we have also sort of neglected the living composer in the big classical music institutions. This series tries to address that problem."

The concerts provide a bridge between Bach's inventive compositions—now canonized as timeless—and the extraordinary contributions of our own era. "Any good music that reveres the past takes the past and reinvents it for its own time," says Reich. Performances by returning Miller favorites, such as Jennifer Koh and Ensemble Signal, showcase the versatility of these musicians, whose playing transports audiences across the centuries.

The dialogue created by these concerts includes an opportunity to hear directly from the composers, who will each join Executive Director Melissa Smey in an on-stage discussion as part of their concert. To hear more from Saariaho, Tower, and Reich about what Bach means to them, as well as the benefits and challenges of presenting original works alongside his, view a video interview online at www.millertheatre.com.



Thursday, February 6, 8 p.m.

Saariaho *Frises* + **Bach** Partita in D minor for solo violin, BWV 1004

Jennifer Koh, *violin*

Jean-Baptiste Barriere, *electronics*

This Finnish composer's international reputation has continued to blossom since her packed 2009 Portrait at Miller. Jennifer Koh—who “gave a stunning, high-energy account of the almost continuous solo line” (*The New York Times*) of Saariaho's violin concerto in that performance—returns to play solo works by Bach and Saariaho. Directly inspired by the D minor partita, Saariaho's *Frises* draws on Baroque forms (passacaglia, ground bass, chaconne) and stretches the sonic palette of the solo violin with live electronics.

Thursday, April 17, 8 p.m.

Tower *Big Sky, In Memory*, and String Quartet #5 “White Water”

+ **Bach** Brandenburg Concerto No. 5

Curtis 20/20

Written around 1720, Bach's Brandenburg concertos remained virtually unknown, tucked away on a library shelf, for more than a century before being published. Today, they number among the crowning achievements of Baroque instrumental writing. For her Bach series program, composer Joan Tower intersperses movements of the fifth concerto—for solo flute, violin, and harpsichord—with her own chamber music, including her trio *Big Sky*, an evocation of the awe-inspiring experience of riding through the Andes mountain range.

Thursday, May 15, 8 p.m.

Reich *Tehillim* + **Bach** *Christ lag in Todes Banden*, BWV 4

Ensemble Signal

Brad Lubman, *director*

American icon Steve Reich curates a program pairing two powerhouse sacred works for voices and chamber ensemble. A setting of Hebrew psalms, *Tehillim* is Reich at his transcendent best, by turns meditative and ecstatic. Reich credits Bach's cantata as an important inspiration, its third-movement duet a model for his own. The thread of taking inspiration from the past extends to the Bach: his cantata was based on a Martin Luther hymn, which was itself an adaptation of a 12th-century Easter tune.

Bach, Revisited series season tickets from \$68; single tickets \$25 - \$45.



Upcoming Events

Thursday, January 30, 8:00 p.m.

STEVEN SCHICK: SOLO

Part One: Origins

Steven Schick, *percussion*

Friday, January 31, 3:00 p.m.

STEVEN SCHICK: SOLO

Conversation: Percussion in the 21st Century

Free event with reception to follow

Saturday, February 1, 8:00 p.m.

STEVEN SCHICK: SOLO

Part Two: Responses

Steven Schick, *percussion*

Thursday, February 6, 8:00 p.m.

BACH, REVISITED

Saariaho + Bach

Jennifer Koh, *violin*

Jean-Baptiste Barrière, *electronics*

Tuesday, February 11, 6:00 p.m.

POP-UP CONCERT

Ensemble Signal

Saturday, February 22, 8:00 p.m.

COMPOSER PORTRAITS

Roger Reynolds

Irvine Arditti, *violin*

Ensemble Signal

Brad Lubman, *conductor*

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