

Sunday, October 20, 2024

AWADAGIN PRATT

Piano

Glassworks (1981)
Opening

Philip Glass

Les barricades mystérieuses (1717)

François Couperin (1668–1773)

Castillo Interior (2013, arr. 2020)

Pēteris Vasks

*Arranged for solo piano by Pēteris Vasks and commissioned
by the Art of Piano Foundation for Awadagin Pratt*

Nocturne for the Left Hand Alone from Three Character Studies (2004)

Fred Hersch

Prelude in D Major, Op. 23, No. 4 (1903)

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943)

Nocturne in B Major, Op. 62, No. 1 (1846)

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

Intermezzo from *The Nutcracker* (1892, arr. 1978)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

Arranged for solo piano by Mikhail Pletnev

The first half of the program is performed without pauses.

INTERMISSION

24 Negro Melodies (1905)

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912)

“Deep River”

“Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child”

Sonata in B minor (1853)

Franz Liszt (1811–1886)

Awadagin Pratt is represented by Cramer/Marder Artists.

The Yamaha CFX22 9' concert grand was provided by Falcetti Pianos in Natick, MA.

NOTE FROM THE CURATOR

Awadagin Pratt is one of the great superstars of the piano. We are thrilled to be welcoming him to the Gardner Museum. The remarkable spread of repertoire in his recital program suggests the range of his interpretive gifts. From the Couperin in the French Baroque to Philip Glass in 1980s New York City, Pratt's program charts a remarkable course through 250 or so years of keyboard writing.

—George Steel, *Abrams Curator of Music*

NOTE FROM 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."

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Among his generation of concert artists, pianist **Awadagin Pratt** is acclaimed for his musical insight and intensely involving performances in recital and with symphony orchestras.

Born in Pittsburgh, Awadagin Pratt began studying piano and violin at an early age. At the age of 16 he entered the University of Illinois where he studied piano, violin, and conducting. He subsequently enrolled at the Peabody Conservatory of Music where he became the first student in the school's history to receive diplomas in three performance areas—piano, violin and conducting.

In 1992, Mr. Pratt won the Naumburg International Piano Competition and two years later was awarded an Avery Fisher Career Grant. Since then, he has played numerous recitals throughout the US including performances at Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles, Chicago's Orchestra Hall and the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. His many orchestral performances include appearances with the New York Philharmonic; Minnesota Orchestra; and the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Indianapolis, Atlanta, St. Louis, National, and Detroit symphonies, among many others. Summer festival engagements include appearances at Ravinia, Blossom, Wolftrap, Caramoor, Aspen, and the Hollywood Bowl.

Also an experienced conductor, Pratt has conducted programs with the Toledo, New Mexico, Vancouver WA, Winston-Salem, and Santa Fe symphonies; the Northwest Sinfonietta; the Concertante di Chicago; and several orchestras in Japan. His most recent conducting

activities include playing/conducting the Chamber Orchestra of Pittsburgh, conducting performances of Porgy and Bess with the Greensboro Opera, and conducting a concert featuring the music of jazz great Ornette Coleman with Bang on a Can at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. In summer 2023, he began his tenure as the Music Director of the Miami Valley Symphony Orchestra in Ohio.

A great believer in working with young people, he has created a program called Black in America, during which he tells about his encounters with the police, especially while driving, starting when he was a teenager and continuing through his postgraduate studies and into his adulthood. His narrative is interspersed with live music performed by Pratt and students, followed by a panel discussion regarding the state of race in America today. Michelle Bauer Carpenter produced a documentary about Black in America, which aired on 90 PBS stations across the country earlier this year.

Mr. Pratt's recordings for Angel/EMI include *A Long Way From Normal*, an all-Beethoven Sonata CD, *Live From South Africa*, *Transformations*, and an all Bach disc with the St. Lawrence String Quartet. His most recent recordings are the Brahms Sonatas for Cello and Piano with Zuill Bailey for Telarc and a recording of the music of Judith Lang Zaimont with the Harlem String Quartet.

Awadagin Pratt is also the founder and Artistic Director of the Art of the Piano and produces a festival every spring featuring performances and conversations with well-known pianists and piano faculty members. This spring, he also organized the first Nina Simone Piano Competition for Black Pianists in collaboration with the Cincinnati Symphony, the University of

Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and the Art of the Piano Festival. The competition was made possible by a generous grant from the Sphinx Organization.

Also through the Art of the Piano Foundation and inspired by a stanza from T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*, Mr. Pratt commissioned seven composers—Jessie Montgomery, Alvin Singleton, Judd Greenstein, Tyshawn Sorey, Jonathan Bailey Holland, Paola Prestini, and Pēteris Vasks—to compose works for piano and strings or piano, strings and a Roomful of Teeth. Ms. Montgomery's concerto, *Rounds*, which Awadagin has played with more than 30 orchestras including the Boston, Chicago, St. Louis, Atlanta, Baltimore, Indianapolis, and Milwaukee symphonies and the Minnesota Orchestra, won a 2024 GRAMMY® Award for Best Contemporary Classical Composition. All seven works were recorded in summer 2022 with the chamber orchestra A Far Cry for New Amsterdam Records.

In July 2023, Pratt joined the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music as a Professor of Piano. He was previously a Professor of Piano and Artist in Residence at the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati for 19 years.

In recognition of his achievements in the field of classical music, he has received the Distinguished Alumni Award from Johns Hopkins University, as well as honorary doctorates from the Berklee College of Music and Illinois Wesleyan, and delivered commencement addresses at those institutions, as well as at Peabody Conservatory.

Awadagin Pratt is a Yamaha artist. For more information, please visit www.awadagin.com.

Kindly turn off all electronic devices during the concert and refrain from any photography or filming in the hall. Also, please note the location of the emergency exit doors: across the hall from the doors through which you entered.

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES:

SPHINX VIRTUOSI WITH BRITTON-RENÉ COLLINS, PERCUSSION

Sunday, October 27

MUSIC OF THE BELLE ÉPOQUE AND THE GREAT WAR

Sunday, November 3

BOSTON CHILDREN'S CHORUS

Saturday, November 9 at 2:00 PM

RAPHAËL FEUILLÂTRE, GUITAR

Sunday, November 10

FAZIL SAY, PIANO

Sunday, November 17

JULIUS EASTMAN X KYLE MARSHALL

Sunday, November 24

The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum resides on the homelands of the Massachusetts Tribe, who belong to this place and continue to regard these lands and waters as sacred.

Music at the Gardner is supported by Nora McNeely Hurley / Manitou Fund. Hemenway & Barnes LLP is the lead corporate sponsor of the Weekend Concert Series. The Museum thanks its generous concert donors: The Coogan Concert in memory of Peter Weston Coogan; Fitzpatrick Family Concert; James Lawrence Memorial Concert; Alford P. Rudnick Memorial Concert; David Scudder in memory of his wife, Marie Louise Scudder; Wendy Shattuck Young Artist Concert; and Willona Sinclair Memorial Concert. The piano is dedicated as the Alex d'Arbeloff Steinway. The harpsichord was generously donated by Dr. Robert Barstow in memory of Marion Huse, and its care is endowed in memory of Dr. Barstow by The Barstow Fund. Music at the Gardner is also supported in part by New Music USA's Organization Fund, Nicie and Jay Panetta, and the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which is supported by the state of Massachusetts and the National Endowment for the Arts.



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