

Sunday, November 17, 2024

FAZIL SAY

Piano

Piano Sonata No. 11 in A Major, K. 331 (1783)

W.A. Mozart (1756–1791)

- I. Andante Grazioso
- II. Menuetto
- III. Alla turca—Allegretto

Préludes, Book I (1909)

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

- La Fille aux cheveux de lin
- La Cathédrale engloutie
- La danse de Puck
- Minstrels

Clair de lune from Suite bergamasque, L. 75 (1905)

Claude Debussy

INTERMISSION

Piano Sonata in D minor, Op. 31, No. 2, "The Tempest" (1802)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

- I. Largo—Allegro
- II. Adagio
- III. Allegretto

Gnossiennes Nos. 1-3 (about 1890)

Erik Satie (1866–1925)

Yeni hayat ("New Life") Sonata for Piano, Op. 99 (2021)

Fazıl Say

This program is performed in memory of Willona Sinclair.



NOTE FROM THE CURATOR

The Turkish virtuoso Fazıl Say stands in a long and distinguished line of composer/pianists. He will perform one of his own fascinating piano sonatas and is cheekily pairing it with Mozart's "Turkish" rondo. How could I resist?—especially when the turbulent center of the program is Beethoven's "Tempest"!

—George Steel, *Abrams Curator of Music*

ABOUT THE ARTIST

With his extraordinary pianistic ability, **Fazıl Say** has been touching audiences and critics alike for almost 30 years in a way that has become rare. Concerts with this artist are different; they are more direct, more open, more exciting. In short: they go straight to the heart. This is what the composer Aribert Reimann must have meant when, during a visit to Ankara in 1986, he had the pleasure—more or less by chance—of hearing the then 16-year-old. He immediately asked his companion, the American pianist David Levine, to come to the conservatoire in the Turkish capital, and he did so with the words that have since become commonplace: "You have to listen to him, the boy plays like a devil."

Fazıl Say received his first piano lessons from Mithat Fenmen, a pianist who had studied with Alfred Cortot in Paris. Fenmen—perhaps sensing how great the boy's talent was—asked his pupil to first improvise every day on everyday themes before engaging in the necessary piano exercises and studies. It was in this engagement with free creative processes and forms that the origin was laid for the enormous improvisational talent and aesthetic outlook that form the core of pianist and composer Fazıl Say's self-image. As a composer, Fazıl Say has been commissioned by Boston Symphony Orchestra, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and the BBC, Salzburger Festspiele, WDR, Münchner Philharmoniker, Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, Wiener Konzerthaus, Dresdner Philharmonie, and Fondation Louis Vuitton, among others. His oeuvre includes six symphonies, two oratorios, various solo concertos, and numerous piano and chamber music works.



Fazıl Say received his fine-tuning as a classical pianist from 1987 onwards with David Levine, first at the Robert Schumann Musikhochschule in Düsseldorf and later in Berlin. In addition, he regularly attended master classes with Menahem Pressler. Moreover, his outstanding technique soon enabled him to master the so-called war horses of world literature with astonishing aplomb, and it was precisely this mixture of subtlety in Haydn, Bach, and Mozart, and virtuoso brilliance in the works of Liszt, Mussorgsky, or Beethoven that finally led to his victory at the International Young Concert Artists Competition in New York in 1994. Fazıl Say has subsequently performed with all the renowned American and European orchestras and numerous great conductors, developing a diverse repertoire ranging from compositions by Johann Sebastian Bach to the "classics" by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, as well as Romantic and contemporary music, including his own compositions for piano.

Since then, Fazıl Say has given guest performances in countless countries on five continents; the French newspaper *Le Figaro* described him as "a genius." In the process, Fazıl Say has also appeared numerous times as a chamber musician. With violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja, for example, he has performed in a fantastic duo for years; other prominent partners have included Maxim Vengerov, the Minetti Quartet, the Modigliani Quartet, Nicolas Altstaedt, and Marianne Crebassa.

Numerous concert halls, orchestras and festivals have invited Fazıl Say as artist-in-residence or introduced him to their audiences with portraits and focus weeks over the past decades. These include, among others, Konzerthaus Dortmund, Konzerthaus Berlin, Alte Oper Frankfurt, Wiener Konzerthaus, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, hr-Sinfonieorchester Frankfurt, Zürcher Kammerorchester, Dresdner Philharmonie, Camerata Salzburg, Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, Rheingau Musik Festival, Ludwigsburger Schlossfestspiele, Bodenseefestival and Festival der Nationen.

Further portraits were heard in Paris, Tokyo, Merano, Hamburg, and Say's hometown, Istanbul. In the 2023/24 season, he was Spotlight Artist at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam and Composer in Focus at the GAIDA Festival in Vilnius, and the Hessischer Rundfunk dedicated a portrait week to him in December 2023.

In 2013, Fazıl Say received the Rheingau Music Prize, and in December 2016 the International Beethoven Prize for Human Rights, Peace, Freedom, Poverty Alleviation and Inclusion in Bonn. In autumn 2017, he was awarded the Music Prize of the City of Duisburg.

Fazıl Say's recordings of works by Bach, Mozart, Gershwin, and Stravinsky on Teldec Classics as well as Mussorgsky, Beethoven, and his own works on naïve have been critically acclaimed and have received several awards, including three ECHO KLASSIK awards. In 2014, his recording of works by Beethoven—the Piano Concerto No. 3 with the hr-Sinfonieorchester Frankfurt under Gianandrea Noseda, the Sonata op. 111, and the Moonlight Sonata—as well as the album *Say Plays Say*, with exclusively his own works, were released. In autumn 2016, Warner Classics released the recording of all Mozart sonatas, for which Fazıl Say received his fourth ECHO KLASSIK in 2017. In 2017, together with Nicolas Altstaedt, he recorded the album *4 Cities*. In autumn 2017, Warner Classics released "Nocturnes" and the album *Secrets* with Marianne Crebassa, which won the Gramophone Classical Music Award in 2018. His 2018 album is dedicated to Debussy. In January 2020, Fazıl Say's recording of all Beethoven piano sonatas was released by Warner Classics and Bach's *Goldberg Variations* followed in November 2022. In January 2023, together with Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Fazıl Say released a recording of sonatas by Bartók, Janáček, and Brahms (Alpha). He continues to record his own works under his label ACM.

WILLONA SINCLAIR MEMORIAL CONCERT

Born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, **Willona Henderson Sinclair** took every opportunity to fill her life with beautiful music. With several concert pianists in the family, Willona herself was also quietly dedicated to playing the piano. She attended Friday concerts of the Boston Symphony for almost 70 years and, along with her husband, Donald, was a generous contributor to both the BSO and the Tanglewood Music Center, funding scholarships for young musicians as well as endowing the Symphony's Harp chair. In addition, Willona was a major benefactor of the Newport Music Festival. Her interest in the art and architecture of Florence, Italy, where she and Donald spent several months a year, and her lifelong love of music found perfect harmony with the Gardner Museum whose treasures and Sunday concerts Willona supported for many years. We are deeply grateful for this opportunity to remember Willona's personal charm and enthusiasm and to recognize her generosity and commitment to the Gardner Museum and its musical programs.

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 PERFORMANCE:

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.



Hemenway
& Barnes LLP

Mass
Cultural
Council

NEWMUSIC
USA

NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
for the ARTS
arts.gov