



FRIENDS OF
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SIMONE
DINNERSTEIN
PIANO

MAY 18, 2019

FRANÇOIS COUPERIN *Les Barricades Mystérieuses*
(1668-1733)

ROBERT SCHUMANN *Arabesque, Op. 18*
(1810-1856)

PHILIP GLASS *Mad Rush*
(b. 1937)

COUPERIN *Tic Toc Choc*

INTERMISSION

ERIK SATIE *Gnossienne No. 3*
(1866-1925)

SCHUMANN *Kreisleriana, Op. 16*
Außerst bewegt
Sehr innig
Sehr aufgeregt
Sehr langsam
Sehr lebhaft
Sehr langsam
Sehr rasch
Schnell and spielend



**SIMONE
DINNERSTEIN**

piano

SIMONE DINNERSTEIN

American pianist Simone Dinnerstein is known for her “majestic originality of vision” (*The Independent*) and her “lean, knowing and unpretentious elegance” (*The New Yorker*).

In 2017 Dinnerstein released the album *Mozart in Havana*, recorded in Cuba with the Havana Lyceum Orchestra. She went on to bring the orchestra to the United States for their first-ever American tour. In the same year, Dinnerstein premiered a piano concerto written for her by Philip Glass and co-commissioned by twelve orchestras. She performed the concerto nationally and internationally during 2018, and released a recording of the piece in spring 2018 on Orange Mountain Music. Finally, in 2017 she also collaborated with choreographer Pam Tanowitz on *New Work for Goldberg Variations*, which was featured on the 2017 top ten lists of critics at *The New York Times* and *The Boston Globe*.

Dinnerstein first attracted attention in 2007 with her self-produced recording of Bach’s *Goldberg Variations*. It was a remarkable success, reaching No. 1 on the U.S. Billboard Classical Chart in its first week of sales. The recording also received the prestigious Diapason D’Or in France and established Dinnerstein’s distinctive and original approach. *The New York Times* called her “a unique voice in the forest of Bach interpretation.” She has gone on to make another eight albums since then with repertoire ranging from Beethoven to Ravel.

Since 2007, the New York-based pianist’s performance schedule has taken her to venues around the world. Dinnerstein has played concerts throughout the U.S. for the Piati-gorsky 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 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 to raise funds for their music education programs. She has also created a program

called Bachpacking for elementary schools, where she takes a digital keyboard into individual classrooms, helping young children to get close to the music she loves. Dinnerstein, a winner of Astral Artists' National Auditions, 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. She is on the faculty of the Mannes School of Music and lives in Brooklyn.

Simone Dinnerstein appears by arrangement with IMG Artists, 7 West 54th Street, New York, NY, 10010.
Tel: 212.994.3500.

NOTES

Program Notes © Elizabeth Bergman

IN BRIEF

BORN: November 10, 1668, Paris, France

DIED: September 11, 1733, Paris, France

MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

PERFORMANCE: Tonight marks the first performance of this work on our series.

ESTIMATED DURATION: 3 minutes

COUPERIN: *LES
BARRICADES
MYSTÉRIEUSES*

In the preface to his collection *Les nations* (1726) for strings and keyboard, François Couperin described his desire to bring together the French and Italian musical styles, which were at the time considered to be as distinct as the two languages. Whereas Italian composers pushed the bounds of virtuosity in newly idiomatic instrumental writing, French composers tended to prize simplicity, clarity, and delicate ornamentation. Couperin, in his keyboard writing, prizes an elegant virtuosity that owes much to both national styles.

Couperin's enigmatically titled "Les Barricades Mystérieuses" (Mysterious Barricades) might fancifully be related to its *style brisé* or "broken style." The boundaries between harmonies are blurred as certain notes linger and broach the division between chords to color the next sonority. Likewise the form, a *rondeau*, which features a refrain (A) alternating with contrasting episodes, creates permeable barricades in the structure A-B-A-C-A-D-A.

More plausibly, however, the title refers to the maze at the Palace of Versailles. No matter: the music is enchanting, appealing, and altogether lovely.

SCHUMANN:
ARABESQUE,
OP. 18

IN BRIEF

BORN: June 8, 1810, Zwickau, Germany

DIED: July 29, 1856, Endenich, Bonn, Germany

MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

PERFORMANCE: Tonight marks the first performance of this work on our series.

ESTIMATED DURATION: 7 minutes

In 1839, when Robert Schumann wrote his *Arabesque*, the word denoted something exotic and even otherworldly. “Arabesque” derives from “Arab,” but the arabesque had also recently become known as a position in classical ballet, with arm and leg extended gracefully forward and back in a display of almost unnatural balance and grace. Schumann’s music strikes just such a balance. A wistful main theme alternates with varied episodes that all remain elegant, dreamy, and truly romantic. The coda is altogether surprising, suggesting that musical reverie can lead to some new and unexpected place of wonder.

GLASS: *MAD RUSH*

IN BRIEF

BORN: January 31, 1937, Baltimore, MD

MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

PERFORMANCE: Tonight marks the first performance of this work on our series.

ESTIMATED DURATION: 14 minutes

Composer Philip Glass is a founding father of Minimalism, a style that embraces repetition to inspire contemplation of the smallest details, shifts, and changes in the music as it unfolds over time. Structure gives way to process, and listening becomes less intellectual and analytical, more sensual and pleasurable.

Glass first composed *Mad Rush* (1979) for organ, an instrument whose resonance and reverberations likewise invite listeners to consider the divine as truly timeless. At the same time, however, *Mad Rush* is tied to a very particular moment in time. Glass was asked to compose a piece to mark the first-ever visit of the Dalai Lama to

New York City. Organizers could not be certain of his schedule and asked Glass to have music playing at the venue (the Cathedral of St. John the Divine near Columbia University) for an indeterminate period.

IN BRIEF

MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

PERFORMANCE: Tonight marks the first performance of this work on our series.

ESTIMATED DURATION: 3 minutes

Couperin tested the limits of the keyboard and keyboard musicians in four books of pieces for harpsichord that explore (and even pioneer) a wide range of techniques. *Tic Toc Choc*, published in 1722, bears the subtitle *Les Maillotins*. The family Maillot were a troupe of rope dancers, and here two hands (rather than two feet) have to navigate a tight space. The piece would have originally been played on two different registers—basically two keyboards—of the harpsichord. But on a piano, the two hands cross over each other. “It’s almost like playing marimba,” Dinnerstein explained to musicologist and journalist Laura Pellegrinelli. “You have to strike the hammers with your two hands in rapid succession on the same note. So your fingers are being used like mallets and can get stuck into each other. It’s gnarly. You really have to choreograph how you play it. And you need to have a piano that is extremely responsive and can repeat very quickly.”

COUPERIN:
TIC TOC CHOC

IN BRIEF

BORN: May 17, 1866, Honfleur, France

DIED: July 1, 1925, Arcueil, France

MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

PERFORMANCE: Tonight marks the first performance of this work on our series.

ESTIMATED DURATION: 3 minutes

A sense of mysterious timelessness suffuses Erik Satie’s *Gnossienne* No. 3, which is idiosyncratically (yet typically for Satie) written without bar lines. (Bar lines are the vertical marks in a score that distinguish the meter; these lines parse out the units of rhythm.) Even so, there is a haunting sense of pulse—like the *tic toc* that Couperin embraces—that never falters. This music has a heartbeat.

SATIE:
GNOSSIENNE
NO. 3

Satie studied at the Paris Conservatory with little success, so dropped out to become a pianist in Parisian cabarets. He sought in his music to demystify the listening experience, the result being some rather black humor. He titled his first composition Opus 62, for example, and other works bear strange—or even repulsive—titles like “Three Truly Flabby Preludes for a Dog.” He played purposefully with the conventions of musical form. An 1890 composition for chamber orchestra called *Vexations* contains only sixteen measures of music, to be repeated eight hundred and forty times.

Satie’s other compositions show him experimenting with the idea of automatic writing: machine-like composition based on repetitions of fixed patterns of sound. In these works, he questioned whether there is any human agency in art. In this *Gnossienne*, the repetition of a few ideas (and unusual scale patterns) creates the sense that these melodies are somehow writing themselves—or at least arise from unknown forces, like vines climbing their way up a wrought-iron banister.

SCHUMANN:
KREISLERIANA,
OP. 16

IN BRIEF

MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

PERFORMANCE: Alfred Brendel, piano, March 9, 2005

ESTIMATED DURATION: 31 minutes

During the second half of the 1830s, Robert Schumann wrote many of his best known and most often performed piano works, including *Kreisleriana*. These were tumultuous years for the composer, as he courted Clara Wieck in the face of her father’s stern resistance. The changing fortunes of his relationship with Clara are reflected in Schumann’s music. *Kreisleriana*, for example, was begun “in part to prove himself in Clara’s and Wieck’s eyes,” the late musicologist John Daverio notes.

Schumann began writing *Kreisleriana* in April 1838. By mid-September, the set of eight pieces that takes its title from the writings of E.T.A. Hoffmann was complete. Schumann identified with Hoffmann’s fictional Kapellmeister, Johannes Kreisler, who (like the real composer) cycled from wild highs to deep emotional lows.

Perhaps wary of the mood swings in the music and in the man, Clara responded cautiously upon first reviewing the new opus: “Sometimes your music actually frightens me,” she confessed, “and I wonder: is it really true that the creator of such things is going to be my husband?”

The two sides of Kreisler’s character are represented in *Kreisleriana* by different keys: G minor for the wildness, B-flat major for his more melancholy, sensitive nature. Or instead, these two keys represent two separate characters: Kreisler himself and his cat. The novel by E.T.A. Hoffmann that inspired Schumann is titled *Lebensansichten des Katers Murr nebst fragmentarischer Biographie des Kapellmeisters Johannes Kreisler in zufälligen Makulaturblättern* (“The Life and Opinions of Growler the Cat, Together with a Fragmentary Biography of Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler on Random Sheets of Wastepaper”). The biography of the musician is interwoven with the autobiography of his cat, Murr. Thus there are two separate but related stories told at the same time in the novel—and in the music.

Kreisleriana alternates between fast and slow movements, and even fast and slow sections within movements. The slow movements are cast in B-flat major, the slow in G minor, however the opening and penultimate movements fall outside this set scheme. The finale, it has been noted, seems to bring together—but not unite—the two distinct voices. The melody in the right hand seems never to quite coincide with its supposed accompaniment in the left. Instead the two characters are left to exist in their separate but shared realms. The composer himself worried about how the decrescendo softening at the close would come off, fearing audiences would not know when to applaud.



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OUTREACH IN ACTION

Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Trio Arabica performed two outreach programs at Denver's South High School before their concert at Gates Hall. On March 5, Trio Arabica arrived early for an assembly of almost 250 students who listened attentively as the trio performed classical and original Arab music. The vocalist explained the lyrics of their first song, which spoke of the sadness of displacement, when an immigrant neither fits in his new home country nor the home left behind. The trio also introduced their unique traditional instruments, the *qanun*, *oud*, and *daf* (hand-held percussion).

In the evening, Trio Arabica was joined by members of Tafelmusik who performed selections from their *Tales of Two Cities: the Leipzig-Damascus Coffee House*. A diverse audience of 150, including Newcomer families of recent immigrants, appreciated the imaginative, cross-cultural celebration of Telemann and Bach interwoven with Arab folk songs. South High School's own orchestra also enjoyed a chance to perform for the community audience. One listener shared his reaction to the evening: "Music is certainly a way of overriding our differences. It unites people into one common language."

FCM selected South for this outreach because of the school's uniquely diverse student body among Denver Public Schools. Of South's 1,600 students, one-third are immigrant or foreign-born, and Arabic language is second only to Spanish. Both of these free community events were made possible by funding from the SCFD and Tour West, a program of WESTAF (Western States Arts Federation, supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts). Thanks to Kaladi Coffee for generously providing coffee for the event.

FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC ANNOUNCES ITS 2019-20 SEASON!

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**Chamber Music Society
of Lincoln Center**

Wednesday, October 16, 2019

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Wednesday, December 11, 2019

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Wednesday, January 15, 2020

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Tuesday, February 4, 2020 (special event)

Wednesday, February 5, 2020

Lawrence Brownlee, tenor

Wednesday, March 4, 2020

Alisa Weilerstein, cello

Inon Barnatan, piano

Wednesday, April 1, 2020

Arnaud Sussmann, violin

Anna Polonsky, piano

Wednesday, May 13, 2020

PIANO SERIES

Yefim Bronfman

Wednesday, September 11, 2019

Pierre-Laurent Aimard

Wednesday, November 20, 2019

Benjamin Grosvenor

Wednesday, March 18, 2020

*Renewal envelopes will be distributed
following tonight's concert.*

*For details on programs, visit [www.
friendsofchambermusic.com](http://www.friendsofchambermusic.com).*

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Ensemble Faucheux

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