

Waterford Concert Series Presents

Inon Barnatan, piano

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Toccatà in E Minor, BWV 914 (1710)

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)
Allemande from Suite in E Major, HWV 430 (1720)

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764)
Courante from Suite in A minor, RCT 5 (1727)

François Couperin (1688-1733)
L'Atalante from Pièces de Clavecin, Ordre 12, No. 8 (1716-17)

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)
Rigaudon from Le Tombeau de Couperin (1914-17)

Thomas Adès (1971-)
Blanca Variations (2015)

György Ligeti (1923-2006)
Musica Ricercata No. 11 (1951-53)
Musica Ricercata No. 10 (1951-53),

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)
Fugue from Sonata in E minor, Op. 26 (1949)

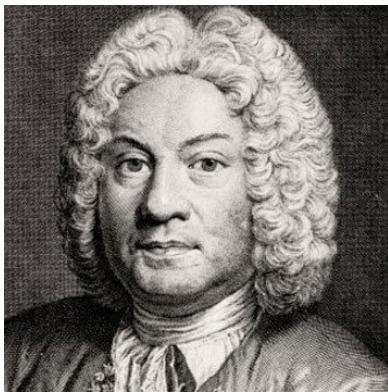
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Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel, Op. 24 (1861)

Program Notes

In the words of Inon Barnatan: “For the first half of this program I took my cue from the kind of instrumental dance suite popular in the Baroque era, with movements including an Allemande, Courante, Fugue, and others. What distinguishes the suite that I assembled is that each movement is by a different composer, and the composers themselves span periods from the Baroque to the 21st century. The relationship of keys and moods as well as the way the different composers were influenced by one another keeps the “suite” a unified whole, meant to be performed without break. The sole work in the second half is a set of variations that Brahms wrote on a theme from Handel’s keyboard suite in B flat, which Brahms develops into an ingeniously beautiful set of variations culminating, like the first half of this program, in an intricate and virtuosic fugue”.

Barnatan’s first half “suite” begins with four 18th century pieces, the first being Johann Sebastian Bach’s youthful Toccata in E Minor, consisting of four short movements, concluding with a fast and invigorating three part fugue. Two gracious and courtly dance movements follow: the Allemande from George Frideric Handel’s Suite in E Major, and the Courante from Jean-Philippe Rameau’s Suite in A Minor. The tempo then picks up sharply with L’Atalante from François Couperin’s Pièces de Clavecin, whose breathless running figurations evoke the huntress of Greek myth.



François Couperin

We then jump forward some two hundred years to Rigaudon, a vigorous dance movement from Maurice Ravel’s *Le Tombeau de Couperin*. In the 17th century, a “tombeau” (literally “tomb”) was a piece composed to honor deceased colleagues; Ravel’s Tombeau was intended as a tribute to the musical style of the French Baroque and to several of his friends who died in the First World War. This is

followed by Thomas Adès' haunting Blanca Variations, commissioned for the 2015 Clara Haskil International Piano Competition. The variations---named for the character Blanca Delgado who plays them in Adès' opera "The Exterminating Angel"---are based on a Judeo-Spanish folk tune, which Adès describes as displaying "an unassuageable harmonic structure very typical of longing and bereavement."



Thomas Adès

The penultimate elements of the "suite" are two miniatures from György Ligeti's "Musica Ricercata" (from the Italian *ricercar*, to investigate). Ligeti wrote "...this is a youthful work, still deeply influenced by Bartók and Stravinsky...The first piece contains only two pitches (along with their octave transpositions); the second, three tones; and so on, so that the eleventh piece uses all twelve pitches." We hear the 11th miniature, a mysterious and increasingly fragmented andante dedicated to the Baroque composer Girolamo Frescobaldi, followed by the 10th, full of dissonance and chromaticism with elements marked to be played "as if mad". The "suite" concludes with the fourth movement of Samuel Barber's Sonata in E Minor, premiered by Vladimir Horowitz in 1949, and often described as the first great American piano sonata. Barber had intended to write only three movements, but in response to Horowitz's view that "the piece needed a very flashy last movement, but with content"--- he added this extraordinarily virtuosic fugue featuring complicated syncopated rhythms and jazz harmonies.

The second half of the program is devoted to Johannes Brahms' monumental Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel, composed in 1861 as a birthday tribute to his friend Clara Schumann. Perhaps the pinnacle of Brahms' compositions for solo piano, the distinguished music historian Sir Donald Tovey ranked it among "the half dozen greatest sets of variations ever written". Composed relatively early in his career, the piece showcases Brahms' deep knowledge of, and love for, the music of the Baroque era. An initial statement of

the theme, a simple but beautiful aria from Handel's Harpsichord Suite No. 1, is followed by 25 variations of remarkable inventiveness and variety, ranging from the baroque to the romantic, and from introspection to the extremes of virtuosity. The first eight variations feature multiple shifts in mood and dynamics; thereafter, the temperature cools, culminating in a kind of funeral march in Variation 13. Variations 14-18, according to Tovey, "arise one out of the other in a wonderful decrescendo of tone and crescendo of Romantic beauty"; the mood then lightens, culminating in the so-called "musical-box" Variation 22. The final three variations feature a massive crescendo leading, in the words of Brahms' biographer Jan Swafford, to "an exuberant fugue with a finish designed to bring down the house".



The young Johannes Brahms

About the Artist

"One of the most admired pianists of his generation" (*New York Times*), Inon Barnatan is celebrated for his poetic sensibility, musical intelligence, and consummate artistry. He is the recipient of both a prestigious 2009 Avery Fisher Career Grant and Lincoln Center's 2015 Martin E. Segal Award, which recognizes "young artists of exceptional accomplishment." He was recently named the new Music Director of the La Jolla Music Society Summerfest beginning in 2019.

Born in Tel Aviv in 1979, Inon Barnatan started playing the piano at the age of three, and made his orchestral debut at eleven. His musical education connects him to some of the 20th century's most illustrious pianists and teachers, including studying at London's Royal Academy of Music with Christopher Elton and Maria Curcio, a student of the legendary Artur Schnabel. Leon Fleisher has also been an influential teacher and mentor. A regular performer with many of the world's foremost orchestras and conductors, he recently completed his third and final

season as the inaugural Artist-in-Association of the New York Philharmonic. His 2018-19 season includes concerto performances with Hamburg's NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Pittsburgh Symphony and the Israel Philharmonic; chamber concerts with the St. Lawrence and Calidore Quartets (both of whom have recently performed at Waterford); and a U.S. tour with long time collaborator cellist Alisa Weilerstein and others. He also makes his International Piano Series debut at London's Southbank Centre, and performs solo at the Seattle Symphony's Benaroya Hall.

A sought-after chamber musician, Barnatan was a member of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's CMS Two program from 2006-09, and tours widely in the US and Europe. His passion for contemporary music sees him commission and perform many works by living composers, including premieres of pieces by Thomas Adès and many others. His highly praised discography spans both solo piano and chamber music, with his debut album of Schubert piano pieces leading London's *Evening Standard* to hail him as "a true poet of the keyboard". His most recent CD is Messiaen's *Des canyons aux étoiles*, and he is currently recording all five of Beethoven's piano concertos with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields.



Inon Barnatan

*Waterford Concert Series***Pianists at Waterford**

Brian Ganz (1997)	Heidi Louise Williams and Sandra Wright Shen (2007)
Ann Schein (1998)	Edward Newman (2009)
Sam Post (2002, 2014)	John O'Connor (2013)
Michael Adcock (2004)	Xiayin Wang (2014)
Ivo Kaltchev (2005)	Angela Hewitt (2015)
Myriam Avalos (2005)	Alon Goldstein (2016)
Gregory Sioles (2006)	