

# DMA #3

## Mari Kawamura Piano Recital

March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022 – 5 p.m.

Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

Partita in E minor, BWV 830 (1730)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)

- I. Toccata
- II. Allemanda
- III. Corrente
- IV. Air
- V. Sarabande
- VI. Tempo di Gavotta
- Vii. Gigue

Night Fantasies (1980)

Elliott Carter (1908 - 2012)

J. S. Bach: Partita in E minor, BWV 830 (1730)

With the Partita No 6 in E minor Bach gives us one of his greatest masterpieces. It is a stupendous work on the grandest scale—one in which we feel his incredible strength of character, security, warmth of heart and deep faith. Here he is no longer writing for popular appeal but on the highest intellectual and emotional plane. The work opens with a Toccata where similar outer sections frame an extended fugue. Both the opening measure and the subject of the fugue make use of the ‘sigh’ motif (a descending appoggiatura) to add extra expressivity. By keeping the same basic tempo throughout the Toccata, unity is achieved (this seems to be called for by Bach as material from the first page later appears in the last episode of the fugue). The Allemande, with its poignant chromaticisms, is followed by a remarkable Corrente. One’s fingers can take an almost physical pleasure in executing its mischievous syncopations with delicacy, rapidity and brilliance. A brief Air, with a surprising second ending, precedes the Sarabande—surely one of Bach’s greatest creations. At first sight (or upon first hearing) this movement can seem baffling. It takes time to discover the framework beneath the profusion of notes, and to realize its emotional power. For me Bach is alone in this Sarabande—alone in communion with his maker in a dialogue that is at once sorrowful, hopeful, passionate, and at times exalted (the marvellous, brief modulations into major keys in bars 7, 8 and 30 interrupt the darkness with flashes of light). To go from deep inside Bach’s inner world (and therefore our own) straight into the Tempo di Gavotta can come as a bit of a shock, but we can only marvel at how Bach immediately begins to dance—even in a minor key. This is not a true gavotte—it is much more like an Italian Giga in 12/8 time. In this, and in the concluding Gigue, the interpreter faces the problem of possible alteration of note values. Playing the semiquavers to coincide with the triplets gives the Tempo di Gavotta more bounce (as does the shortening of the first two notes in the right hand). There are two very different ways of playing the Gigue fugue. One is to play a version in triple metre, bringing it somewhat closer to a traditional jig; the other is to play it exactly as written, emphasizing its angularity. Bach really outdoes himself in this final Gigue, demanding the utmost in mental virtuosity from the player.

--Angela Hewitt

Elliott Carter: Night Fantasies (1980)

Night Fantasies is a piano piece of continuously changing moods, suggesting the fleeting thoughts and feelings that pass through the mind during a period of wakefulness at night. The quiet, nocturnal evocation with which it begins and to which it returns occasionally, is suddenly broken by a flighty series of short phrases that emerge and disappear. This episode is followed by many others of contrasting characters and lengths that sometimes break in abruptly and at other, develop smoothly out of what has gone before. The work culminates in a loud periodic repetition of an emphatic chord that, as it dies away, brings the work to its conclusion.

In this score, I wanted to capture the fanciful, changeable quality of our inner life at a time when it is not dominated by strong, directive intentions or desires – to capture the poetic moodiness that, in an earlier romantic context, we employ in the works of Robert Schumann like Kreisleriana, Carnaval, and Davids-bundlertanze.

--Elliott Carter

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