



University of North Texas
College of Music

Guest Artist Recital | Monday, 24 February 2025 | 8:00 p.m. | Recital Hall

Fidan Aghayeva-Edler, piano

Processional (2018) Hannah Kendall
(b.1984)

10 Miniatures (2009).....Helen Grime
(b.1981)

Jasmine Petals (1998) Rahilia Hasanova
(b.1951)

from Opus 11 (2024) Ermir Bejo
2nd Movement (b.1987)
World Premiere

Winter, from The Four Seasons (2009)Liza Lim
(b.1966)

-INTERMISSION-

Program three hundred thirty-eight of the 2024–2025 season
Photography and videography are prohibited

From The Garden (2023) Sidney Corbett
(b.1960)

Lacuna (2020) Wang Lu
(b. 1982)

The Piano at the Palace Beautiful (2019) Marti Epstein
(b.1959)

Johannesburg Etude 2 (2015).....Clare Loveday
(b.1967)

fardanceCLOSE (2012/2020)Chaya Czernowin
(b.1957)

Program Notes

Hannah Kendall *Processional* (2018)

Processional is inspired by and takes its name from Norman Lewis' artwork (1965), which is an abstract representation of the 1965 Selma to Montgomery March. Lewis slowly conveys the energy of the march through a series of white strokes, depicting those processing, within a central widening band; like a beam of light, as the procession grows in length and number.

I was drawn to the simplistic, yet intricate beauty of Lewis' piece, and its capability to powerfully embody such a significant moment in history. I also thought it apt that the title indicates continued processing, marching and protesting; that Lewis' work is still very much relevant in the present day.

My musical representation starts slowly and quietly high in the piano's register, steadily leading to gentle undulating and repetitive rhythms, which gradually build in intensity to a forceful and driving section. The piece ebbs and flows in urgency in this way between contrasting bolder, and more delicate material; almost always constructed of free-flowing lines to reflect Lewis' blurred white strokes. The work unrelentingly culminates to its final peak, punctuated by strong chords in the bass line. It returns to a remote fluidity, ending on a soft flourish as the procession continues into the distance. HK

Helen Grime *10 Miniatures* (2009)

In *10 Miniatures*, I wanted to explore the idea of transforming material in unusual ways. Each miniature is related to its predecessor. I have taken an idea or series of ideas, whether it is a chord, melodic fragment or rhythmic cell, and used it to form the starting point for the next movement. Each movement has its own title, ranging from *Delicate and Fleeting* to *Bold and Ceremonial* and *Urgent and Rhythmical*. HG

Rahilia Hasanova *Jasmine Petals* (1998)

Jasmine Petals is a piano cycle of the seven colorful emotional miniatures. Impressed by my own thoughts about the fugitiveness and fragileness of our lives, full of unexpected changes and disappointments, sad or joyful shakes, I composed these seven reflections. The contemplation of beauty and gentleness of jasmine flowers, coming and vanishing recalling fulfill the sounding of these pieces. They are individualized regarding their textures and forms. But actually, they are short improvisations that relatively express my feelings, disappearing through space measurements and time, like drying and dropping down jasmine petals. Two miniatures of the cycle, miniatures V and VII, represent an idea of clocks that accompany us from our childhood to the end. As dry jasmine flowers lose its petals as time shrinking out day-by-day... minute-by-minute...

Ermir Bejo Op. 11: 2nd movement (2024)

(1.) *There, to one side of us, to one side of the world wave after wave breaks on the shore: (2.)* *There's a star on the wave, and a man, and a bird, reality and dreams and death - wave afterwave. (3.)* *Dates are irrelevant. I was, I am, I will be ... - Arseny Tarkovsky*

Op. 11 for piano captures fleeting fragments of beauty and impermanence - waves rolling beneath a cloudy sky, elusive bird songs, and memories dissolving into the currents of time.

The second movement suspends time, like the still depths of an ocean. A quiet melody emerges, distant and introspective. Hints of birdsong suggested by trills ripple through the texture, highlighting a fragile tension between movement and stasis. The music invites the listener to fully inhabit the present moment and concludes in a fleeting glimpse of wonder-like a shooting star vanishing into the night.

Sidney Corbett From The Garden (2023)

I have known the sculptor and visual artist Alexander Polzin for many years and in the course of our friendship we discovered that we have both worked independently on projects concerned with the same subject matter: Giordano Bruno, Heiner MOiier and many others. So, we began to discuss what we might be able to do together and Alexander mentioned Walter Benjamin's text on the painting by Paul Klee, *Angelus Novus: Engel der Geschichte (The Angel of History)*. As I began to think about how to approach this text and the painting behind it, one of the strong impulses I felt was helplessness in the face of the inevitable, the storm garnering mountains of rubble and chaotic wreckage, the storm which Benjamin calls "progress." And thus, I began to think about origins. What is the source of the inexorable descent? The expulsion of the angel from the garden was of course also our own expulsion. This piece is dedicated to Alexander Polzin.

Wang Lu Lacuna (2020)

The extensive range of Chinese American architect I.M. Pei's work exemplifies the ultimate amalgamation of tradition and modernist abstraction. Inspired by Pei's work, my piece explores both abstraction and tradition by employing stark registral and timbral depth on the piano with punctuated elements and presenting a continuous lyricism throughout. WL

Clare Loveday Johannesburg Etude 2 (2015)

This etude is an exploration of the piano's resonance. Evoking Johannesburg in the early days of the day, as seen looking down from a window in a high-rise building, the piano's varying resonances are used to evoke the space and surprising quietness of the pre-dawn city and its emergence into busy life.

Marti Epstein The Piano at the Palace Beautiful (2019)

This piece was written on request of Donald Berman which was to be a response to *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott. What a fitting request this was, as *Little Women* was a book I read many, many times when I was a child.

As a young girl, I was well aware that Alcott was presenting Jo, the second of the four March sisters, as the one her readers should identify with, or at least aspire to be like. However, I clearly remember being very annoyed with certain aspects of Jo's personality, and while I admired her independence and her devotion to both her art and her family, it was—and still is Beth whom I loved best.

When I was 7, I lost a little brother. After that, I became obsessed with stories of people, especially young people, dying. Scenes describing Beth's initial illness (scarlet fever), recovery, and second fatal illness (which is never defined, but one surmises that it might have been cancer) became etched in my brain. I read those passages over and over again, almost as a kind of catharsis. She dies, but then we can open the book at the beginning and see her alive again. This was extremely powerful for me as a child coping with my own loss.

Beth also clearly suffers from some kind of social anxiety. Her reticence about speaking to people outside of the comfort of her family, her complete lack of curiosity about the world outside her home, was oddly fascinating and resonant.

The only thing that brought her out of her shell was music. Many mentions are made early in the book about her passion for playing the piano. One of my most favorite scenes in the book is when, after being invited by Old Mr. Laurence to come to his mansion next door to play the neglected piano that had belonged to his daughter, Beth timidly enters the house—The Palace Beautiful—and begins to play (we shouldn't forget how brave this was for her). Old Mr. Laurence is up in his study listening to her. My piece is an imagination of what he might have heard, not only what she actually played, but how his memory may have filtered and altered the sound of the piano wafting up the stairs.

This begs the question of what Beth actually played on the piano. While I love Greta Gerwig's recent film of *Little Women*, I very much object to the use of Beethoven and Chopin as the pieces Beth would have played. It's not clear she actually took lessons, and there are several mentions of books of hymns that she liked to play through, in my imagination, she actually isn't that technically proficient, but rather has a deep, heartfelt love of the tactile sensation of touching the keys and the resulting sound that pours out in my imagination, she plays through hymns and possibly even improvises as she becomes lost in her own world. My piece takes a Methodist Hymn, Fortitude (music by David Smith, words by Maltbie Babcock) as scaffolding around which I layer other kinds of sonorities that I imagine she either plays or Mr. Laurence hears (or both).

All four March sisters are creative. I think Beth has the richest and deepest inner life which she expresses through playing the piano.

Chaya Czernowin fardanceCLOSE (2012/rev.2020)

What dance is this? Is it the dance coming from afar, its remnants too entangled to decipher, one which was brought by a gust of wind, as you stand alone and listen to a far away party in the night? Or is the one so close that the heavy beating keeps the ears grounded onto a distorted repeated detail? Neither is danceable to the legs - but both dancers would like to dance with the imagination, leading notions of distance and closeness astray.

The repetitions from measure 39 onwards, which are separated by longer and longer breaths or breaks, should be played consistently ff and with a lot of physicality and force. As if every repetition is one movement of you as you swim. You dive into the water, you come up again for air, then dive again. As time goes on and tiredness sets in, you need more time for breathing - till you are not sure if you have the power to come up again...

Biography

Berlin-based pianist **Fidan Aghayeva-Edler** focuses on contemporary music performance and improvisation. Active in Berlin's contemporary music scene, she collaborates closely with composers, pursuing innovative work supported by grants and scholarships from organizations including Musikfonds Berlin, Deutsche Orchester-Stiung, Berliner Senatsverwaltung für Kultur und Europa, Fonds Darstellende Künste, GVL-Stipendium, the Norwegian Quota Scholarship, the Dwight and Ursula Mamlok Foundation, Cesko-Nemecky fond budoucnosti, and inm.

During the pandemic, she developed new concert formats, including livestreamed world premieres, shop window concerts, and virtual duo improvisations. Her 2024 project, #365daysofperformance, features daily livestreamed solo piano pieces, primarily by female and overlooked composers. In August 2024, she presented a 24-hour solo piano performance featuring music exclusively by women composers.

Her recordings have been broadcast by Bayerischen Rundfunk, RBB Kultur, WDR3, SWR, Klassikcast of the Goethe Institut, MDR Figaro, KAN Israel, Radio France, and Český rozhlas, among others. Her solo albums include "Verbotene Klänge: Sechs Suiten" (2019, Kreuzberg Records), featuring music by persecuted composers, and "Fenster" (2022, GENUIN), with works by seven contemporary female composers, which was nominated for the Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik and ECHO Klassik. Collaborative projects include the CDs and albums "Klavierwerke" (2016), "Twenty for piano" (2020), "The Black Garden" (2020), and "Seven Sisters" (2024).

As a soloist and ensemble performer, she has appeared at venues across Europe, including the Philharmonie Berlin, Grieghallen Bergen, and within the "musica reanimata" concert series at Konzerthaus Berlin, Impuls Festival, Borealis Festival, NUNC! 5, I Baku Contemporary Days Festival, Bergen Festspillene, akademie kontemporär at HfMT Hamburg, Junge Akademie Exhibition AdK Berlin, and Klangteppich.

Aghayeva-Edler is dedicated to rediscovering music by persecuted composers and promoting gender equality in her programming. She explores new musical territories through improvised performances (solo and ensemble) with extended piano techniques, interdisciplinary projects (including poetry and dance), and exploration of diverse instruments and genres. She leads contemporary piano technique workshops at music high schools and festivals throughout Germany and Europe.

Aghayeva-Edler also appears as a pianist and performer in theatre and film, with recent roles in Dominik Graf's "Fabian," the fourth season of "Berlin.Babylon," the chamber opera "Wir" at Deutsches Theater Berlin, "vis-à-vis" at Ackerstadtpalast, Heinrich Horwitz's "Amazon Rising," and "Ich heb' dir die Welt aus den Ängeln" at Neuköllner Oper.

<https://www.aghayeva-edler.de/>