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SANDERS AND BLANCHE SOSLAND MUSIC FUND
presents

SIMONE DINNERSTEIN, PIANO
The Eye Is the First Circle

This evening marks Simone Dinnerstein's Series debut.

The Muriel McBrien Kauffman Family Foundation
is the sponsor of our 59th Season.

7:00 P.M., SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2024
FOLLY THEATER
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

Simone Dinnerstein, piano

SIMONE DINNERSTEIN, PIANO

The Eye Is the First Circle

CONCEIVED, DIRECTED AND PERFORMED BY SIMONE DINNERSTEIN

- I. Emerson
- II. Hawthorne
- III. The Alcotts
- IV. Thoreau

Visual design by Simone Dinnerstein and Laurie Olinder,
with Davison Scandrett and Simon Harding.

Featuring The Fulbright Triptych by Simon Dinnerstein and
Piano Sonata No. 2, The "Concord" Sonata by Charles Ives.

The Eye Is the First Circle was developed in residence at the
Alexander Kasser Theater, Montclair State University.

Laurie Olinder, projection designer
Davison Scandrett, lighting designer
Simon Harding, associate video designer/engineer
Betsy Ayer, production manager/stage manager

Please hold applause until the end of the piece. Thank you.

*Please join us after the concert for an informal conversation with Simone Dinnerstein.
We invite you to move to seats closer to the stage at that time.*

Simone Dinnerstein appears by arrangement with
IMG Artists, 7 West 54th Street, New York, NY 10019. Tel: 212.994.3500
For more information please visit www.simonedinnerstein.com

ARTIST STATEMENT

As Emerson wrote in his essay *Circles*, “The life of man is a self-evolving circle, which, from a ring imperceptibly small, rushes on all sides outwards to new and larger circles, and that without end.”

The Eye is the First Circle is a very personal piece that, at its core, explores how my family’s world shaped my relationship to art. I devised it using my father Simon Dinnerstein’s *Fulbright Triptych* and Charles Ives’s *Concord Sonata*. My intellectual, emotional and artistic response to each work, and to the connections I saw between them, is what formed the larger circle I drew.

I envisioned *The Eye Is the First Circle* as a single artwork with many kinds of expression. To craft it, I collaborated closely with the projection designer Laurie Olinder, along with lighting designer Davison Scandrett and associate video designer/engineer Simon Harding. Laurie’s rich imagination, consummate eye for composition, and artistic skill brought the visual ideas to life. The pieces of the puzzle that I wanted to interweave—such as using hidden cameras inside the piano, interspersing natural and human sounds of the world around us, and filming myself in the actual garden that was the subject of the copper plate at the center of the triptych—were discussed with the entire artistic team. A member of the Kasser Theater’s stage crew sat at the piano as a stand-in for me so that the four of us could be out in the theater, viewing the stage and constructing the work.

While creating this production, I discovered that I had an aptitude for visual composition and for directing. It was as if I discovered a sixth sense that I had never used before, and I felt the joy of generating an artistic experience that expanded beyond music, the area where I am most used to expressing myself. When I began, I did not know what the end point would be. As Emerson wrote, “The one thing which we seek with insatiable desire is to forget ourselves, to be surprised out of our propriety, to lose our sempiternal memory, and to do something without knowing how or why; in short, to draw a new circle.”

–Simone Dinnerstein

MOVEMENTS

EMERSON

Emerson is the most thickly layered of the movements. The music makes large, unpredictable intervallic leaps, piles ideas on ideas and moves between them abruptly. It is complex, dense and three-dimensional. The photographic images of trees fuse with the green of the *Triptych*’s central table and the inner world of the piano’s hammers. The projected images flatten, expand, and distort in the light of the late afternoon.

HAWTHORNE

Hawthorne takes place in the darkest part of night, emerging from the outdoor sounds of crickets, bullfrogs and owls. Elements of ghost stories and the grotesque surrealism of night terrors are juxtaposed with moments of ethereal beauty, incorporating children’s drawings floating and bobbing to the music. The frantic voices of children playing reach a crescendo over the increasingly crazed music of the coda. Live action cameras multiply my hands across the projections.

THE ALCOTTS

The Alcotts is a breath of tenderness. It takes place out of time in the golden light of memory. My parents and my infant self are pulled from the outer panels of the triptych into the center until we are seated together behind the piano, watching me play. Images of family appear and disappear. I am caught in the past while making music in the present.

THOREAU

Thoreau emerges at dawn with the sounds of birds bringing us out of the darkness. We travel through the landscape of the triptych, and gradually pull back until the entire painting finally emerges across the width of the stage. The central icon, the copper engraving plate, grows and lifts out of the painting, as the golden harp of the piano rises out of the instrument. The two fuse and expand until I have been immersed by the garden depicted in the copper plate. I step out of myself and walk through the garden. The camera pulls in, closer and closer, until we are left with the image of my eye.



Photo by Lisa-Marie Mazzuco

SIMONE DINNERSTEIN

■ Simone Dinnerstein is an American pianist. She lives in Brooklyn, New York with her husband, son and dog, less than a mile from the hospital in which she was born. Simone has a distinctive musical voice. *The Washington Post* has called her “an artist of strikingly original ideas and irrefutable integrity.” She first came to wider public attention in 2007 through her recording of Bach’s *Goldberg Variations*, reflecting an aesthetic that was both deeply rooted in the score and profoundly idiosyncratic. She is, wrote *The New York Times*, “a unique voice in the forest of Bach interpretation.” Since that recording, she has had a busy performing career. She has played with orchestras ranging from the New York Philharmonic and the Montreal Symphony Orchestra to the London Symphony Orchestra, and the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale Rai. She has performed in venues from Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center to the Berlin Philharmonie, the Vienna Konzerthaus, the Seoul Arts Center, and the Sydney Opera House. She has made

ten albums, all of which topped the Billboard classical charts, with repertoire ranging from Beethoven to Ravel. In recent years, Simone has created projects that express her broad musical interests. Following her recording *Mozart in Havana*, she brought the Havana Lyceum Orchestra from Cuba to the United States for the very first time, raising the funding, booking the concerts, and organizing their housing and transport. Together, Simone and the orchestra played eleven concerts from Miami to Boston. Philip Glass composed his Piano Concerto No. 3 for Simone, co-commissioned by twelve American and Canadian orchestras. She collaborated with choreographer Pam Tanowitz to create *New Work for Goldberg Variations*, which was met with widespread critical acclaim. Working with Renée Fleming and the Emerson String Quartet, she premiered André Previn and Tom Stoppard’s *Penelope* at the Tanglewood, Ravinia, and Aspen music festivals. Most recently, she created her own string ensemble, Baroklyn, which she directs from the keyboard. Their performance of Bach’s cantata *Ich Habe Genug* in March 2020 was the last concert she gave before New York City shut down. Simone is committed to giving concerts in non-traditional venues and to audiences who don’t often hear classical music. For the last three decades, she has played concerts throughout the United States for the Piatigorsky Foundation, an organization dedicated to the widespread dissemination of classical music. It was for the Piatigorsky Foundation that she gave the first piano recital in the Louisiana state prison system at the Avoyelles Correctional Center. She has also performed at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women in a concert organized by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. Simone founded Neighborhood Classics in 2009, a concert series open to the public and hosted by New York City Public Schools to raise funds for their music education programs. She also created a program called *Bachpacking* during which she takes a digital keyboard to elementary school classrooms, helping young children get close to the music she loves. She is a committed supporter and proud alumna of Philadelphia’s Astral Artists, which supports young performers. Simone counts herself fortunate to have studied with three unique artists: Solomon Mikowsky, Maria Curcio, and Peter Serkin, very different musicians who shared the belief that playing the piano is a means to something greater. *The Washington Post* comments that “ultimately, it is Dinnerstein’s unreserved identification with every note she plays that makes her performance so spellbinding.” In a world where music is everywhere, she hopes that it can still be transformative.

LAURIE OLINDER PROJECTION DESIGNER

■ Laurie Olinder is a multimedia designer, painter and photographer. Ms. Olinder has designed projections for many composers, and theater artists including John Adams, The Kronos Quartet, The Brooklyn Philharmonic, Gavin Bryars, Michael Gordon, Henryk Gorecki, David Lang, The Kronos Quartet, Maya Beiser, and Julia Wolfe among many others.

Recent projection design & video projects include: *Vaya Vaya* with vocalist Mahsa Vahdat with The Kronos Quartet, Wick Simmons' *Exquisite Drones* with composers inti figgis-vizueta, Conrad Tao, and Jack McGuire, and Video Design for Elysian Fields' *Transience of Life*. *Anatomy Theater* (Red Cat Theater, LA Opera), *The Sinking of the Titanic* (Big Ears Festival), Brooklyn Youth Chorus with The Kronos Quartet (Roulette, Brooklyn), *Silent Cranes* (Roulette, Brooklyn) composed by Mary Kouyoumdjian, *Bubbles* (Roulette, Brooklyn NY) composed by Alexandra Vrebalov, *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field*, David Lang (Montclair State), *Brooklyn Village*, composed by David T. Little with The Brooklyn Philharmonic & The Brooklyn Youth Chorus (Roulette Brooklyn New York), *Persephone* (Brooklyn Academy of Music). Ridge Theater *Lightning at Our Feet* (Brooklyn Academy of Music), *The Death of Klinghoffer* Ridge Theater John Adams (Brooklyn Academy of Music).

Laurie Olinder is a founding member of New York's Ridge Theater and has been recognized with an OBIE Award, a New York Dance and Performance "Bessie" Award, and an Eliot Norton Award for Outstanding Design in the Theater and a NYFA fellowship.

DAVISON SCANDRETT LIGHTING DESIGNER

■ Davison Scandrett is a Bessie award-winning lighting designer and production manager based in Brooklyn, NY. In addition to creating the visual design for the Peak Performances commission of *New Work for Goldberg Variations* by Simone Dinnerstein and Pam Tanowitz, he has also designed works by Rashaun Mitchell + Silas Riener, Charles Atlas, Sonya Tayeh, Merce Cunningham, Sarah Michelson, Netta Yerushalmy, Moriah Evans, Mina Nishimura, Dylan Crossman, Andrew Ondrejcek, Rebecca Lazier, and the Off-Broadway productions of Mike Birbiglia's *Thank God for Jokes* and Neal Brennan's *3 Mics*. Production management credits include projects with Wendy Whelan, Marina Abramovic, Bill T. Jones, Benjamin Millepied,

Kyle Abraham, BalletBoyz, Jennifer Monson, Brian Brooks, Silk Road Ensemble, Steve Reich, Stephin Meritt, Brooklyn Rider, The Knights, Lyon Opera Ballet, Lincoln Center Festival, and the Paris Opera Ballet. He served as Director of Production for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company from 2008-2012 and is currently the Design and Production Consultant for the Merce Cunningham Trust.

SIMON HARDING ASSOCIATE VIDEO DESIGNER/ENGINEER

■ Simon Harding is an award-winning set and video designer for live performance, interested in modalities of performance that create a living space between objects and the body. He has designed nationally and internationally for theater, dance, and performance art work. Harding began in the theater as an actor and director, branching into design after becoming a co-founder and the resident designer for SaBooge Theatre. With SaBooge, he designed sets and lighting for all of their productions including the critically acclaimed shows *Hatched*, *Fathom*, and *Every Day Above Ground*. Harding's designs include *Custodians of Beauty* (Palissimo Dance), *Strangers in Paradise* (Opera Omaha), Jack Spicer's *Billy The Kid* (3 Headed Calf), *Up and Away* (Trusty Sidekick), *The Iceman Cometh* [Act IV] (Target Margin Labs), *Here We Are* (The Living Theater), *the.humanest* (Incubator Arts Project), *Measure Back* (Christopher McElroen), *Tyson vs. Ali* (Reid Farrington/3LD), BAM Poetry Project (BAM).

BETSY AYER PRODUCTION MANAGER/STAGE MANAGER

■ Betsy Ayer's recent favorites include *Requiem*, the Shed; *Idomeneo*, Salzburg Festival; *Only the Sound Remains*, White Light Festival, *Glass Handel*, Opera Philadelphia; *St. Matthew Passion*, Lincoln Center/ Park Avenue Armory. She has also stage-managed for Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), New York City Opera, the Teatro Real in Madrid, The Santa Fe Opera, and Glimmerglass Opera. Recent semi-staged concert productions: Berlin Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic. Recent Dance credits include: Four Quartets, Bard Summerscape and Barbican Centre, London; Trisha Brown Dance Company, FLEXN at the Park Avenue Armory/ International tour; New York City Ballet, Susan Marshall & Company. Theatre: Lincoln Center Festival; Shockheaded Peter; Classic Stage Company; New York Theatre Workshop; Manhattan Theatre Club. Concerts: Interim Production Manager, Carnegie Hall. She is a graduate of Smith College.