

The Ph.D./D.M.A. Programs in Music
Faculty Recital

October 16, 2023 7:30 p.m.
Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall



Homage
Thomas Sauer, piano

Prelude and Fugue in F Major
from *The Well Tempered Clavier II*, BWV 880 (c. 1740) J. S. Bach
(1685–1750)

Sonata in F Major, KV 332 (1783) W. A. Mozart
(1756–91)
Allegro
Adagio
Allegro assai

Homenatge (2011) Tania León
(b. 1943)

Dribble (2022) Harold Meltzer
(b. 1966)

Adiós Nonino (1959) Astor Piazzolla
(1921–92)

INTERMISSION

Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Händel, op. 24 (1861) Johannes Brahms
(1833–97)

Please switch off your cell phones and refrain from taking flash pictures.

Notes on the Program

Homage

The act of homage—paying respect or tribute to another—is embedded in the transmission of musical practice from one generation to another, whether in the sphere of composition, improvisation, or performance. Our musical traditions have evolved to a state of complexity that presupposes careful study through a lengthy apprenticeship; imitation and emulation loom large in the life of any young musician. This program explores several vectors of musical homage: student to teacher, teacher to student, composer to composer, composer to athlete(!), and even son to father.

I open the program with a tribute to my late teacher Edward Aldwell, whose performances of the Bach F-major Prelude were miraculous in knitting together linear and harmonic progression; they remain an inspiration in my memory to this day. Mozart's Sonata KV 332 draws together many stylistic strands, among them a profligate melodic invention, operatic sense of singing at the keyboard, a theatrical use of silence, and a buoyancy of pianistic figure. These render it an ideal teaching piece, and I play the sonata today in homage to the many students to whom I have assigned it over the years, and whose patience I have tested with long winded explanations of its finer points. "Homenatge" is the Catalan word for homage; Cuban-American composer Tania León wrote her *Homenatge* in tribute to Catalan composer Xavier Montsalvatge, who was himself inspired by the music of León's native Cuba: a circular homage, as it were, full of percussion effects, bells, and the strains of a sensuous habanera. Harold Meltzer's *Dribble*, an homage to Lionel Messi, is full of intercutting lines and dynamic shapes that evoke the Argentinian soccer star's ability to slice his way through defenders on the way to putting a ball in the net. Closing the first half is a solo-piano version of Argentinian tango master Astor Piazzolla's tribute to his father, *Adiós Nonino*. Played for many years to worldwide acclaim by Piazzolla's quintet, this episodic tango blends many contradictory energies, and makes a virtue of nostalgia, a sentiment often shunned by the high minded.

To a high minded camp certainly belonged the twenty-eight-year-old Johannes Brahms, whose Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Händel paid tribute not only to Händel, but also to J.S. Bach and his approach to variation technique in the Goldberg Variations. Brahms, like Bach, built upon the harmonic frame of his chosen theme in writing variations that range widely in character and texture while remaining true to the organizing forces of half cadence, linear ascent, and full cadence. The concluding fugue is Handelian in its sonic brilliance and sweep.

--Thomas Sauer

About the Artist

American pianist **Thomas Sauer** performs regularly as soloist, chamber musician, and recital partner. Audiences and critics alike praise his playing for its clarity, expressivity, and assured stylistic sense. Some of Mr. Sauer's recent solo appearances include concertos with the Quad-City and Tallahassee Symphonies and the Greenwich Village Orchestra, and recitals at Mannes College, Merkin Concert Hall, Rockefeller University, St. John's College, Oxford, and Vassar College. With his long-time duo partner, English cellist Colin Carr, Mr. Sauer has appeared at the Wigmore Hall (London), Holywell Music Room (Oxford), the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (Boston). Other duo recitals include violinists Midori (Berlin Philharmonie and the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels) and Jennifer Koh (Kennedy Center, Kimmel Center, Princeton University). Among Mr. Sauer's chamber music appearances are performances at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and the Philadelphia and Boston Chamber Music Societies; performances with members of the Juilliard String Quartet at the Library of Congress; and numerous concerts with the Brentano String Quartet. Mr. Sauer has performed at many of the leading festivals in the United States and abroad, including Marlboro, Caramoor, Music@Menlo, Chamber Music Northwest, El Paso Pro Musica, and the Chamber Music Festivals of Seattle, Taos, Four Seasons (North Carolina), Portland, and Salt Bay (Maine); as well as Lake District Summer Music (England) and Festival des Consonances (France). He has premiered works by Robert Cuckson, Sebastian Currier, Donald Martino, Ruth Schonthal, Nathan Shields, Suzanne Sorkin, and Richard Wilson, among many others. A committed teacher, with students at Mannes College, Vassar College, and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, Mr. Sauer was the founder and director of the Mannes Beethoven Institute, a highly-regarded week-long summer training program that ran for fifteen seasons in New York.