

BIOGRAPHY

SIMONE DINNERSTEIN, *piano*

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Season 2006-2007

Telarc International

Classico

Delos

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SIMONE DINNERSTEIN

Piano

American pianist Simone Dinnerstein has fast been gaining international attention as a commanding and charismatic artist, and as one of the most compelling women pianists performing today. Since being featured by *The New York Times* as an artist “poised for a breakthrough” in September 2006, Ms. Dinnerstein has performed to a sold-out audience at the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s prestigious Accolades series, debuted with the American Symphony Orchestra under Leon Botstein and signed an exclusive recording contract with Telarc International, which will release her much-anticipated recording of Bach’s Goldberg Variations worldwide in August 2007.

Highlights of the current season include her debut recital at the Salle Cortot in Paris and recitals at Philadelphia’s Bach Festival and the Copenhagen Music Festival. Ms. Dinnerstein will play a recital at the Moselfestwochen in Germany in June 2007 and will play at the opening gala concert of the “Metropolitan Museum of Art in Berlin” exhibition at Berlin’s Neue Nationalgalerie. During the 2007-2008 season, she will give debut recitals at London’s Wigmore Hall, Berlin’s Philharmonie and at the National Philharmonic Hall in Vilnius. In New York City she will give recitals on the People’s Symphony series at Town Hall and on Lincoln Center’s Great Performers series. Ms. Dinnerstein will also tour with the Dresden Philharmonic under Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos and with the Czech Philharmonic under Zdenek Macal. She will open the concert season of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra in Jerusalem under Leon Botstein and make her debut with the Württembergische Kammerorchester Heilbronn. With duo partner Zuill Bailey she will perform Beethoven’s five sonatas for piano and cello at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City and the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC.

After Ms. Dinnerstein’s triumphant New York recital debut at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall in November 2005, *The New York Times* described her interpretation of Bach’s Goldberg Variations as “a thoughtfully conceived, thoroughly modern performance that seemed to take into account the development of Western art music since Bach . . . an individual, compelling performance that so completely evoked the image of a journey, that Schubert’s *Winterreise* kept coming in mind.” Harris Goldsmith wrote in a feature article in *The American Record Guide* that it was “a thrilling roller coaster ride with many wonderful surprises in store... her harmonic intensity left an indelible impression on this mesmerized listener.”

As a winner of the Astral Artistic Services National Auditions, Ms. Dinnerstein appeared as both concerto soloist and in recital at Philadelphia’s Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. She received the Classical Recording Foundation Award for 2006 and 2007 for her recordings with cellist Zuill Bailey of Beethoven’s complete works for piano and cello on the Delos label. The first volume was released in October 2006 and volume two is scheduled for release in the spring of 2008.

Ms. Dinnerstein has enjoyed critical acclaim in *The New York Times*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Gramophone*, *The American Record Guide* and *Fanfare*. Her recording sessions for the Goldberg Variations with Grammy award-winning producer Adam Abeshouse was the subject of a feature article by David Patrick Stearns in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. She has made live appearances on National Public Radio's *Performance Today* and WNYC's *New Sounds* and *Soundcheck*, and can regularly be heard on NPR affiliates across the country. In February 2007 she gave a live broadcast recital on WFMT in Chicago.

Since 1996 Ms. Dinnerstein has played concerts throughout the United States for the Piatigorsky Foundation, an organization dedicated to bringing classical music to non-traditional venues. Amongst the places she has played are nursing homes, schools and community centers. Most notably, Ms. Dinnerstein gave the first classical music performance in the Louisiana state prison system when she played at the Avoyelles Correctional Center.

Ms. Dinnerstein is a graduate of The Juilliard School where she was a student of Peter Serkin. Among her many scholarships and awards at Juilliard were the William Petschek Piano Scholarship, the Vladimir Horowitz Scholarship and the Chopin Award. She also studied with Dr. Solomon Mikowsky at the Manhattan School of Music and in London with Maria Curcio, the distinguished pupil of Artur Schnabel. For two summers, she was a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center.

Ms. Dinnerstein lives in Brooklyn, New York with her husband and five-year-old son.

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Thank you!

SIMONE DINNERSTEIN

Critical Acclaim

“Among the other things that might be said is that she is a forceful player but also a thoughtful one, and if those qualities seem at odds, each of her performances showed how they can work. In the Copland [Piano Variations], for example, she outlined the opening theme with a steely clarity and the sharpest definition, and in the most extroverted variations she produced a titanic, sharp-edged sound that evoked the work’s modernist provenance. Yet in variations that demanded a sense of mystery, her timbre was gauzy and veiled, and, most crucially, she used silence as eloquently as volume and color... These same characteristics, offered on a much broader canvas and greatly magnified in execution, were at the heart of Ms. Dinnerstein’s performance of Beethoven’s final sonata. She played the opening movement with a Lisztian boldness, but even at its most dramatic and rumbling, Ms. Dinnerstein kept the music’s textures transparent and its structure clear. And in the work’s closing pages, she drew on a delicate, almost whispered timbre that proved the most moving moment of the performance.”

-Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*, 11/22/06

“Emotionally, intellectually and technically, this music [Beethoven Sonata No. 32, Op. 111] couldn’t be more demanding, and Dinnerstein’s performance was in a league with any of the great Beethoven pianists of our time...the music’s mercurial qualities weren’t outbursts so much as a musical landscape with endless possibilities and no boundaries. I’ve heard Dinnerstein play fine performances, but none with the thunderbolt-hurling confidence of this one.”

-David Patrick Stearns, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 3/24/07

“The piano concerto is often taken as a pure display piece, an example of Liszt’s very worst tendencies. Often played as a vehicle for virtuoso pianists with cursory attention to an orchestral score (which does indeed show how much Liszt would learn about orchestration as his work developed) it appears shallow and even gimmicky—above all with that silly triangle in the finale! I won’t say that it is an unrecognized masterpiece, but Simone Dinnerstein and Mr. [Leon] Botstein [with American Symphony Orchestra] did it all the justice they could. In this performance the orchestral parts were immaculate and well balanced with the piano. The interchanges between soloist and orchestra could not have been more lively, exploring subtle variations in tone colors as they were batted about between them. As the dreaded triangle introduced the last movement, its master and Ms. Dinnerstein played in the wispiest of pp’s, producing a truly amazing sound, which they continued to develop as the movement progressed through a range of interesting sonorities. I shouldn’t slight *Totentanz*, which is a fascinating piece in itself. As in the concerto, Mrs Dinnerstein brought just the right balance of supreme virtuosity and musical understanding to bear, and the result was triumphant.”

-Michael Miller, *BerkshireFineArts.com*, 11/07/06

“Looking toward greatness....poised for a breakthrough...”

- Daniel J. Wakin *The New York Times*, 9/10/06

SIMONE DINNERSTEIN

Critical Acclaim *continued*

“Add a modern piano to the equation – in Ms. Dinnerstein’s case, a 1910 Hamburg Steinway – and there can be a level of coloration beyond the palette Bach knew. A listener could argue that Ms. Dinnerstein’s penchant for shading effects and for contrasts in articulation (from velvety in one variation to jackhammer-like in the next) and in dynamics (from whispered pianissimos to ferocious fortissimos) is anachronistic. But that would be beside the point. This was a thoughtfully conceived, thoroughly modern performance that seemed to take into account the development of Western art music since Bach. Bach’s accent and language dominated, unquestionably, but there was a hint of Prokofiev in her sharply accented reading of Variation No. 14 and her steely No. 27, a touch of Beethoven in her forceful account of No. 29 and perhaps even a trace of Tchaikovsky in the ringing, gracefully pedaled sound she created in No. 28... there was something in the slight pauses she took between repeated sections, or between halves of variations, and something in her pacing of the set as a whole, that so completely evoked the image of a journey that Schubert’s Winterreise kept coming to mind. It may not be the way you want to hear the Goldbergs every time, but it was certainly an individual, compelling performance.”

– Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*, 11/30/05

“Dinnerstein’s inspired interpretation had many wonderful surprises in store... her harmonic intensity left an indelible mark on this mesmerized listener... Dinnerstein deftly maintained symmetry while managing somehow to free herself (and Bach’s music) of its potential strictures. She changed tempos *within* variations, but musically, naturally, and unobtrusively. Often, she used a bold Roualt-like expressionism to underline moments of high drama.”

– Harris Goldsmith, *American Record Guide*, March/April, 2006

“[Dinnerstein] played [Bach’s Goldberg Variation’s] opening aria at an expansive tempo with each note glistening in the air. Most of the variations come with repeats, and Dinnerstein’s treatment of them grew more introspective, even daringly so, as if the music were being whispered into the listener’s ear.”

–David Patrick Stearns, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 11/30/05

“Reminiscent of Martha Argerich in its gracefulness, Simone Dinnerstein’s first recording highlights her generous, sincere and voluptuous technique, and her visceral and organic impetus, rich in spellbinding emotion. Without forcing the keys, Ms. Dinnerstein’s interpretation impresses the listener for its feminine and masculine inter-twinings so unusual among today’s young interpreters. Hers is a rendition blending pathos and pleasure, and aiming towards a nuanced freshness. The recording is full of vitality and concreteness which challenges the senses of body and soul; it expresses the kind of rebirth in which there is no room for melancholy and the sadness of the world.”

– Mauricio Gregorini, *Italia*, 7/01

“A highlight was the composer’s [Aaron Copland] serious modernist side as shown in the Piano Variations of 1930, a tough and rewarding piece that was excellently played by Simone Dinnerstein.”

– Anne Midgette, *The New York Times*, 8/05

SIMONE DINNERSTEIN

Critical Acclaim *continued*

“This was my first in-person encounter with pianist Simone Dinnerstein, and if it’s possible for Mozartean refinement to be startling, it is with her. Refinement can also seem retiring, but there’s a clarion energy about her playing that also allows her to be leonine.”

-David Patrick Stearns, The Philadelphia Inquirer, 3/10/04

“Her abilities and talents were evident from the first chord and continued to grow and expand as the composition proceeded. Very clean and crisp articulation was heard throughout and dynamics were handled in a very sensitive manner. Tempos were breathtaking and balanced – all contributing to excellent tone and color. Contrasts and nuances were present in a first rate manner. Her passionate interpretation made this reviewer feel he was hearing the great Wanda Landowska, who is thought to be one of the greatest interpreters and performers of the music of Bach.”

-John T. Prestwood, El Paso Times, 4/6/04

“She took listeners on the best kind of joy ride – one fueled by virtuosity and attention to tone, mathematical exactitude as well as passion...the most remarkable trait of Dinnerstein’s playing is the connectiveness between notes, a gorgeous blend of power and finesse.”

-Peter Dobrin, The Philadelphia Inquirer, 1/17/03

“Not a lot of pianists could make the transition from the bravura start [of Busoni’s cadenzas in Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 21] to the sweet music-box section to a crafty inching-up to Beethoven and then an unusual transition back into the concerto itself. But Dinnerstein shaped the adventure smartly...[she] made a lovely, ringing sound with perfectly formed articulation. There’s no question about the direction of every phrase, and she found that Mozart of grace, precision and intelligence that only the best pianists know lies beneath some of the simple-seeming notes on the page.”

– Peter Dobrin, The Philadelphia Inquirer, 11/19/02

SIMONE DINNERSTEIN

Critical Acclaim continued

Critical acclaim for CD of Beethoven Sonatas for Piano and Cello, Op. 5, No. 1-2, and Op. 69 Zuill Bailey, cello and Simone Dinnerstein, piano

“A fine musical duo offer some magical moments in their first Beethoven set...Cellist Zuill Bailey and pianist Simone Dinnerstein exhibit remarkable chemistry, with a flexible, conversational approach to the score. Born out of this relaxed yet musical treatment, sudden bursts of creativity stand in relief.”

-Andrew Druckenbrod, Gramophone, 3/07

“The bywords here are subtlety and drama -- both very important adjuncts to Beethoven’s sound world. I have seldom heard such attention paid to follow-through of dynamics, general balance between instruments, and a willingness to pile on the volume come what may— or to whisper when it’s called for. The variety of tonal expression the part of both artists is remarkable, and so is the subtle use of rubato.”

-David Moore, American Record Guide, March/April, 2007

“There's the sign of a promising Beethoven cello sonata cycle when the early works don't make you want to skip to the later ones. So it is in this first in a two-volume set of Beethoven cello/piano works - partly because Zuill Bailey and Simone Dinnerstein are able to access the music's youthful energy, partly because the performers have true charisma in their surface sound and a hyper-alert way with a phrase.

And once you do get to the great Op. 69 cello sonata, Bailey and Dinnerstein show themselves to be one of the most fascinating chamber-music duos anywhere, in performances that are practically bursting with heart and soul. They take chances at every turn, with results that consistently take you deeper into the music. Those who have heard Dinnerstein's local concerts, sponsored by Astral Artistic Services, could mistake her for having a miniaturist's temperament. Not here. Sound and gestures are big; the vision is even bigger.”

-David Patrick Stearns, Philadelphia Inquirer, 11/06

SIMONE DINNERSTEIN

Discography

- Bach** Goldberg Variations
TELARC CD 80692
(worldwide release on August 28, 2007)
- Beethoven** Complete Works for Piano and Cello Vol. 1
Zuill Bailey, cello
Simone Dinnerstein, piano
Released 2006
Delos DE 3368
- Bach, Vieuxtemps
Chopin, Mendelssohn** Zuill Bailey, cello
Simone Dinnerstein, piano
Released 2003
Delos DE 3326
- Mendelssohn- Bartholdy** Works for Cello & Piano
Simca Heled, cello
Simone Dinnerstein, piano
Classico CLASSCD 389
- Beethoven** Complete Sonatas for Piano and Cello
Simca Heled, cello
Simone Dinnerstein, piano
Classico CLASSCD 344-5