

IAN PACE – Piano

Goldbergs Recast

City St George's, University of London
Performance Space

Tuesday 8 July 2025, 18:30

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH,
transcribed **FERRUCCIO BUSONI**

Aria mit 30 Veränderungen (Goldberg-Variationen), BWV 988

MICHAEL FINNISSY

Seventh Political Agenda (2023-2025)
[World Premiere]

- I. Erste Ballet-Szene:
Fatima's next job could be in
cyber
- II. Zweite Ballet-Szene:
[she just doesn't know it yet]
- III. Dritte Ballet-Szene
Re-think. Re-skill. Re-boot.

CHRISTOPHER FOX

A Mercian Feasting Dance (2024)
[World Premiere]

INTERVAL

MICHAEL FINNISSY

Extra Goldbergs (2021)

MICHAEL NYMAN

Nyman's Goldberg (2018)
[World Premiere]

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH, *Goldberg-Variationen*, BWV 988 (c. 1738-41)

To better comprehend the different reworkings of Bach's *Goldberg-Variationen*, BWV 988 I will summarise some basic facts about the original work. Widely regarded as one of the great masterpieces for the keyboard, featuring immensely diverse invention through the variations, as well as an unusually pronounced rhythmic

character, it was the longest such work published during the eighteenth century, and would only be exceeded by Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* Sonata and Diabelli Variations. It was published in 1741 as *Aria mit verschiedene Veränderungen*, as the fourth part of the pedagogical work *Clavier-Übung* published 1726-1741 (the first volume contains the six harpsichord partitas, the second the *Concerto nach Italienischen Gusto*, BWV 971, and *Ouverture nach Französischer Art*, BWV 831, and the third an organ Prelude and Fugue in E-flat, BSV 552, 21 chorale preludes, BWV 669-689 and Four Duets, BWV 802-805). and probably composed in the late 1730s, for Count Kaiserling, Russian ambassador to the electoral court of Saxony, to sooth him during regular sleepless nights. The young Johann Gottlieb Goldberg (1727-1756), and according to the 1802 biography of Bach by Johann Nikolaus Forkel, the works were written for Goldberg to play, as he is said often to have done during the Count's sleepless nights. This story has been often questioned by later scholars, though, including the claim that Goldberg played the work in its entirety at the age of 14 (though this is not impossible). Goldberg did however study composition with Bach in Leipzig in the later 1740s, and may have given a complete performance at a later date.

The work features an Italianate Aria, played at the beginning and end of the work, in between which there are 30 variations. The melody of the aria does not appear in any recognisable form in the variations; rather they are based upon the fundamental 32-bar bass line (always varied somewhat, including in the Aria, which creates a regular change of harmony in each bar. Overall, the aria is highly symmetrical and periodic – the 32 bars can be clearly divided into two groups of 16, and these can be subdivided into 8 bar periods, 4 bar phrases, and 2 bar motives. In general, the variations tend to reinforce rather than vary these qualities, as well as an emphasis on downbeats.



This bass is very characteristic of many sixteenth-century ground basses (especially the four opening descending stepwise pitches), while closer to Bach's time parallels have been found in works of Handel, Muffat, Purcell and Johann Christian Bach,

though these are generally shorter and as such more amenable to passacaglias or chaconnes. The authorship of the aria itself has also been contested. The only handwritten copy known to have existed is to be found in Anna Magdalena Bach's notebook, but various scholars believe that she copied this from the autograph score.

The work was written for a two-manual harpsichord, which makes some of the original text, with its recurrent hand-crossings especially testing when played in this form on a (one-manual!) piano. Bach indicates how many manuals are to be used for each section, with variations 5, 7, 29 marked as to be played on either one or two , and nos. 8, 11, 13, 14, 17, 20, 23, 25, 26, 28. The writing is more virtuosic than in any of Bach's other keyboard music, which may suggest the influence of Domenico Scarlatti, whose *Essercizi* were published in London in 1738 or 1739 (Peter Williams even suggests the work may have been a response to the Scarlatti collection). It is possible that a copy of these may have reached Bach in Leipzig.

All of Bach's 30 variations are in G, with nos. 15, 21 (canons at the fifth and seventh respectively) and 25, in the tonic minor. They are organised in groups of three, with every third variation (except the last) as a canon – variation 3 at the unison, variation 6 at the second, variation 9 at the third, variation 12 at the fourth, and so on up to variation 27 at the ninth (this last the only true round). Then in place of a further canon, variation 30 is indicated as a *quodlibet*, featuring multiple popular/folk melodies (the extent to which these derive from real folk melodies is contested). There is further sustained imitative writing in variations 2, 4, 16, 19 and 30, and fugues in variations 10 and 22. A range of other variations resemble genre compositions even if not always instantly recognisable as such.

Variation 16, marked by Bach as an overture, is clearly written in the French style with dotted rhythms and upward flourishes and tight *agréments*. This has commonly been considered the centre of the cycle (and, as Peter Williams has pointed out, a piece in the French style appears at the centre of each volume of the *Clavier-Übung*), so that the work can be considered as in two large sections.

The following gives an overview of the structure. I group the variations as A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, B3, etc. Where not indicated, Bach indicates the variation is to be played on a single manual.

Bach

Aria	3/4	3 voices	Like a sarabande
Var. 1 - A1	3/4	2 voices	Like a polonaise. Hand-crossings
Var. 2 - A2	2/4	3 voices	Imitative, like a trio sonata
Var. 3 – A3	12/8	3 voices	<i>Canone all'Unisono</i>
Var. 4 – B1	3/8	4 voices	Like a passepied
Var. 5 – B2	3/4	2 voices	Duet with hand-crossing, 1 or 2 manuals
Var. 6 – B3	3/8	3 voices	<i>Canone alla Seconda</i>
Var. 7 – C1	6/8	2 voices	Gigue, with dotted rhythms, 1 or 2 manuals
Var. 8 – C2	3/4	2 voices	Duet with hand-crossing, style of Couperin. 2 manuals.
Var. 9 – C3	C	3 voices	<i>Canone alla Terza</i>
Var. 10 – D1	C	4 voices	Fughetta
Var. 11 – D2	12/16	2 voices	Duet with hand-crossing, 2 manuals

Var. 12 – D3	3/4	3 voices	<i>Canone alla Quarta</i> , canon inversus
Var. 13 – E1	3/4	3 voices	Melodic, <i>sarabande doublée</i> , 2 manuals
Var. 14 – E2	3/4	2 voices	Duet with hand-crossing, 2 manuals
Var. 15 – E3	2/4	3 voices	G Minor. <i>Canone alla Quinta</i> , canon inversus
Var. 16 – F1	C-3/8	2-4 voices	French Overture leading to stretto fugue
Var. 17 – F2	3/4	2 voices	Duet with hand-crossing, like Vivaldi/Scarlatti. 2 manuals.
Var. 18 – F3	C	3 voices	<i>Canone alla Sesta</i> , like trio-sonata
Var. 19 – G1	3/8	3 voices	Minuet
Var. 20 – G2	3/4	2 voices	Duet with hand-crossing, 2 manuals
Var. 21 – G3	C	3 voices	G Minor. <i>Canone alla Settima</i> . Like an allemande.
Var. 22 – H1	C	4 voices	Combination of fugue and gavotte.
Var. 23 – H2	3/4	2-4 voices	Duet with hand-crossing, 2 manuals
Var. 24 – H3	9/8	3 voices	<i>Canone all'Ottava</i> .
Var. 25 – I1	3/4	3 voices	G Minor. Adagio arioso, very chromatic. 2 manuals
Var. 26 – I2	18/16	3 voices	Sarabande, but virtuosic with hand-crossings. 2 manuals.
Var. 27 – I3	6/8	2 voices	<i>Canone alla Nona</i> , round.
Var. 28 – J1	3/4	2-4 voices	Hand-crossing with trills. 2 manuals.
Var. 29 – J2	3/4	2-3 voices	Percussive with alternating chords. 1 or 2 manuals.
Var. 30 – J3	C	4 voices	Quodlibet, in manner of folk/popular song.
Aria da Capo	3/4	2 voices	Like a sarabande.

BACH-BUSONI. *Aria mit 30 Veränderungen (Goldberg-Variationen)*, BWV 988

Bach's variations were composed some time before anything akin to the modern keyboard recital ever existed. Charles Rosen has suggested that is probably erroneous to consider much of Bach's keyboard music as intended for public performance, rather than for private and pedagogical purposes. Beyond the alleged (private) performance by Goldberg himself, it has also been speculated that Wilhelm Friedmann and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach may have performed the cycle, but there is no documentation of this. So the work was known mostly through the printed edition for a long time. Works of this scale were uncommon concert fare until at least the second half of the nineteenth century (when more 'monumentalist' programming was pioneered by Hans von Bülow and others).

The performance history of the Goldberg Variations has been documented well by Erinn E. Knyt, in her book *Johann Sebastian Bach's Goldberg Variations Reimagined* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), on which I draw here. Through the nineteenth century there were various arrangements and creative editions, some for two pianos, which were performed privately. One such was performed by Samuel Wesley and Vincent Novello in 1810 at Charles Burney's home, and this event inspired a critical reflection from E.T.A. Hoffmann. Liszt is said to have played the work, but we know little else about whether he played all or part of it, and whether he might have varied it. His student José Vianna da Motta performed it in 1885 at Liszt's

masterclass in Weimar. Ferruccio Busoni first played the Goldberg Variations in Berlin in 1895. Others followed including Harold Samuel, Arthur Friedheim, Alfred Reisenauer and Donald Francis Tovey, while Vianna da Motta also played it in Berlin in 1908.

Busoni had studied Bach's music intently from when young and from the late 1880s started making transcriptions of organ and other works for piano. From 1894 to 1923 he edited 25 volumes of an edition of Bach's keyboard works, in collaboration with Egon Petri and Bruno Mugellini. No-one today would use these editions, replete with many editorial additions and modifications (dynamics, articulations, tempi, expressive markings, etc.) primarily in order to access the eighteenth-century Bach, but they remain fascinating documents of their time. While Busoni distinguished *Bearbeitungen* (generally transcriptions of music for plucked instruments, including the harpsichord) from *Übertragungen* (transcriptions of music for instruments using continuous tones, such as the organ or violin). Almost all of the versions in Busoni's editions can be considered *Bearbeitungen*, because of the free licence employed in the editing process.

The edition of the Goldberg Variations is no exception in this respect, and constituted an attempt to render the work more accessible to modern audiences, and achieved some success in this respect, popularising the work. In his note in the edition, Busoni grouped this with the Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor for organ, BWV 582, and the Chaconne from the Partita in D minor for solo violin, BWV 1004, as the three great examples of Bach's use of variation form. He considers the variations to be divided into 'pianistic' and 'imitative' (including not just the canons but other contrapuntal variations) types, between which come some 'detached' variations, including the Gigue, French Overture, and the Adagio of variation 25.

Busoni's prescriptions in order to make the work suitable for public performance will seem drastic by modern standards, but the result is coherent. He recommends omitting the repeats, then also omitting nine of the variations (though these still appear in the edition). These include 7 of the 9 canons: variations 3, 9, 12, 18, 21, 24 and 27, many of the characteristics of which Busoni thought covered in other variations; as well as the French Overture (variation 16, which Busoni felt broke the chain of the series), one of the two virtuosic variations 14 and 17 (Busoni indicates that 17 can be substituted for 14 here, a practice he followed in his own performances, though I opt to keep to variation 14). He indicated a division of the work into three groups as follows (those marked with an asterisk (*) are those in which Busoni undertook a fully renotated *Bearbeitung*):

Aria	3/4	3 voices	<i>Largamente e cantato</i>
PRIMO GRUPPO			
Var. 1 -A1	3/4	2 voices	<i>Allegro con freschezza, e decisos</i>
Var. 2 - A2	2/4	3 voices	<i>Andantino, dolce</i>
Var. 4 – B1	3/8	4 voices	<i>Lo stress movimento</i> (from var. 3 – <i>Andante con eleganza e con moto</i>)
Var. 5 – B2	3/4	2 voices	<i>Allegro, non troppo</i>
Var. 6 – B3	3/8	3 voices	<i>Canone alla Seconda: Allegretto tranquillo</i>
Var. 7 – C1	6/8	2 voices	<i>Allegro scherzando</i>

*Var. 8 – C2 3/4 2 voices *Allegro*

SECONDO GRUPPO

Var. 10 – D1	C	4 voices	Fughetta 1: <i>Alla breve</i>
*Var. 11 – D2	12/16	2 voices	<i>Lostesso tempo, più vivace</i>
Var. 13 – E1	3/4	3 voices	<i>Andante con grazia</i>
Var. 14 – E2	3/4	2 voices	<i>Allegro ritenuto</i>
Var. 15 – E3	2/4	3 voices	<i>Canone alla Quinta, in moto contrario:</i> <i>Quasi Adagio</i>
Var. 19 – G1	3/8	3 voices	<i>Allegretto piacevole</i>
*Var. 20 – G2	3/4	2 voices	<i>Allegretto vivace</i>
Var. 22 – H1	C	4 voices	<i>Fugato: Alla breve</i>
*Var. 23 – H2	3/4	2-4 voices	<i>Non Allegro</i>
Var. 25 – I1	3/4	3 voices	<i>Adagio</i>

TERZO GRUPPO

Var. 26 – I2	18/16	3 voices	<i>Allegro corrente</i>
*Var. 28 – J1	3/4	2-4 voices	<i>Andante brillante</i>
*Var. 29 – J2	3/4	2-3 voices	<i>Allegro finale: Allegro non troppo</i>
*Var. 30 – J3	C	4 voices	<i>Quodlibet: Frisch und volkstümlich, doch nicht ohne Würde</i>
*Aria da Capo	3/4	2 voices	<i>Largamente</i>

As is clear, the extent of Busoni's reworkings becomes more pronounced as the cycle progresses. Throughout he provides tempi, dynamics, articulation and phrasing markings, expression markings, and some pedallings. In some places he modifies pitches (mostly to modify the configurations and make them more 'pianistic'), often doubles octaves in the bass, introduces new melodic fragments in places, and adds very specific voicing (accentuating the alto rather than soprano part) in the first canon which appears, B3. Perhaps the most striking change is to the final version of the aria, which Busoni strips of ornaments (in order to 'restore the theme to its original melodic outline, simplified and freed from the elaborate network of ornamentations'), moves down an octave, and adds a somewhat grandiose bass in octaves.

What results is a highly dynamic work of around 30 minutes, as much Busoni as Bach, with its own very special internal logic and drama. Busoni first performed the work in this form at the Berliner Singakademie on 10 October 1914, and it was received very enthusiastically. He would go on to perform it various countries in this version, while some of his pupils such as Egon Petri and Erwin Bodky also did so. It was only with the advent of new harpsichord performances (and in particular the first recording on this instrument in 1933 by Wanda Landowska) and then a move towards a greater reverence for the original score from pianists including Claudio Arrau, Rosalyn Tureck, Jörg Demus and Glenn Gould, that Busoni's rendition fell out of fashion. But in recent years a number of pianists have taken it up again and recorded it. It stands as an important document of a particular moment in the history of performance and pianistic style, which can still be immediate today.

MICHAEL FINNISSY, *Seventh Political Agenda* (2023-2025)

Several of Finnissy's immensely varied *Political Agendas* have first been heard at this venue. The third, written in the aftermath of the Brexit vote, was premiered by me at City on 7 July 2016, while the fourth, consisting of three new reworkings of Gershwin songs, was premiered by Philip Thomas, me and Finnissy himself at the launch of the book *Critical Perspectives on Michael Finnissy: Bright Futures, Dark Pasts* on 26 June 2019.

The *Seventh Political Agenda* started out as a tribute to Lindsay Edkins for her 50th birthday in 2024, and reflecting her long love for ballet. The first sketches combined material derived from the second movement of Busoni's Second String Quartet (1887), the Valse Finale from Chaikovsky's *The Nutcracker/Caisse-Noisette/Щелкунчик* (1892) and the Third Couplet from the Chaconne in D major from Elizabeth Jacquet de la Guerre's *Pièces de Clavecin* (1707). By the time of the final suite, these were distributed across the cycle, which also took its cue from one of a bleak series of adverts commissioned by the government in 2019, as follows (specifically that relating to ballerina Fatima):



Each of the three pieces is taken from one phrase of the advert, and also each is entitled a *Ballet-Szene*, after Busoni's series of works from the 1880s and 1890s of that name. The first is dedicated to Lindsay Edkins, and draws upon Norwegian-Danish composer Hermann Severin Løvenskiold's music for the ballet *La Sylphide* (especially the third *Andantino doloroso* number, for the Window scene between James and the Sylphide) written for the Royal Danish Ballet at Copenhagen (which company Lindsay and I went to see in Copenhagen in November 2024 with a performance of the Balanchine production of *The Nutcracker*). The second piece derives from Léo Delibes' *La Source* (1866), and also filters in aspects of the Busoni, and is dedicated to Monica McCabe. The third piece then draws upon the Chaikovsky and is dedicated to Heather Wright.

CHRISTOPHER FOX, *A Mercian Feasting Dance* (2024)

A Mercian Feasting Dance was written in 2024 as a birthday gift for Lindsay Edkins in one of those special years. Mercia was the kingdom in the part of England where Lindsay grew up and my Feasting Dance imagines how birthdays might have been celebrated in the 8th century when Offa was king of Mercia. The score ends with a line from Geoffrey Hill's Mercian Hymns: 'I liked that', said Offa, 'sing it again.'

© Christopher Fox 2025.

MICHAEL FINNISSY, *Extra Goldbergs* (2021)

Works based in music of Bach recur through the course of Finnissy's output. In *Contretänze* (1985) he set the melody of the Fugue in C major from Book 1 of *Das wohltempierte Klavier*, BWV 846 somewhat in the style of Macedonian folk music. The ghosts of Bach haunt many parts of *The History of Photography in Sound* (1995-2001), especially in the section entitled *Bachsche Nachdichtungen*. In *Georgi Tutev* (1996, rev. 2002), Finnissy draws upon the aria 'Ermarme dich' from the *Matthäus-Passion*, as Tutev had done in his *J.S.B. Meditations* (1992), while in *Zwei Deutsche mit Coda* (2006) he draws extensively upon material from the slow movement of Bach's Concerto for Two Violins in D minor, BWV 1043. A section of the extended *Beat Generation Ballads* (2014) is entitled *Veränderung* in reference to Bach's *Aria mit verschiedenen Veraendrunen* (a form of derivation distinct to *Variationen*) and also *Einige canonische Veränderungen über das Weynacht-Lied, Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her*, BWV 769, for organ. In this work, a section near the end entitled *Canone alla Quinta (inversus)* employs material from Variation 15 of the *Goldbergs*.

Extra Goldbergs is an extremely free work, tonally and rhythmically, taking its cue from parts of Bach's work. It consists of twelve short pieces, structured as four groups of three to mirror part of the structure of the Bach. In the loosest sense, the cycle retains a tonal centre of 'G' throughout. Nos. 1-3 were written as part of a project organised by pianist Rachel Fryer entitled *Variations Down the Line*, in which five living composers (Finnissy, Nicola LeFanu, Alison Kay, Samuel Becker and Julian Broughton) wrote works to be interspersed in between Bach's variations. These three pieces take their cue from Bach's Variations 19-21. In the first piece, Finnissy's takes a rendition of Bach's original figuration from Variation 19, and then builds a free composition upon free retrogrades of three-bar units from the Bach (often retaining the middle bar in its original form), moving between different implied keys and concluding in the treble register. The second extends Bach's gesture in Variation 20 of a series of staccato quavers (four for Bach, ten for Finnissy) followed by three semiquavers, with an 'overlay' (as found in various earlier Finnissy piano works from *Folklore* (1993-94) onwards) of detached single or small groups of chromatic pitches, alternated with the rhetoric gesture of a single staccato pitch, ornament, then *tenuto* note (the latter distinct from the Bach). Subsequently Finnissy removes the semiquavers and widens the tessitura of the staccato pitches, introducing dyads as well, while the intensification of the overlay blurs the boundary between this and the other material. The third piece, after Variation 21, is more sombre and aloof, focused

upon Bach's ascending and descending stepwise melodies, also varying the intervallic relationship between the two parts (rather than Bach's three, though Finnissy adds a third part in the last three bars) when there are moments of canonic writing.

Nos. 4-6 are dedicated to Japanese pianist Yukiko Takagi. The fourth piece derives from Bach's elegant *sarabande doublée*, Variation 13, but here both fragmented and rendered as a monophonic quasi-folk melody (as found in many of Finnissy's works of the 1980s and 1990s, especially *Folklore*, and in numerous places in *The History of Photography in Sound*). Sometimes Bach's more extravagant figurations are allowed to morph into grace note groups. The origins of the fifth piece are more obscure (and may equally draw upon music other than Bach), but the texture and rhythms appear to be an allusion to the Variation 10 Fughetta. The sixth piece employs initially some of the descending stepwise patterns of Variation 15, the first in a minor key. But in place of Bach's plaintive canon Finnissy employs a series of extroverted *animato e fortissimo* gestures ranging around the keyboard, through octave displacements and other means.

Nos. 7-9 are dedicated to Italian pianist Lorenzo Marasso. The seventh piece is clearly derived from Bach's Gigue in Variation 7, though while Bach's work was in 6/8 throughout, Finnissy uses a consistent 9/8. As in the first piece, he employs retrogrades of groups of three bars to generate material. Gigue rhythms recur in the eight and ninth pieces, albeit in a more veiled manner. The eight is a mysterious and hushed work consisting of intricate gestures with a rhetorically 'open' ending (a strategy Finnissy had earlier employed in *My Parents' Generation Thought War meant Something* from the *History*) and settling momentarily into 6/8 patterns. The ninth piece begins in a mostly regular 6/8 or 3/4, with a bass line derived from stepwise figuration that serves as a form of *cantus firmus*. Later Finnissy introduces the staccato overlays as found in the second piece.

Nos. 10 to 12 are dedicated to the memory of Glen Capra, a one-time MA Music student of Finnissy at the University of Sussex, a pianist who played in various local premieres. The first piece derives from Bach's tragic and chromatic Variation 25, but once again transformed into a quasi-folkloristic rendition in the manner of the fourth piece. If this piece seems to indicate life and joy rather than death, this is shattered by the violent dissonances at the beginning of the eleventh, which are gradually transformed into the types of gestures found in the sixth piece. The final piece is one of memory, in two sections, the first *ansioso* (but not too slow), a free commentary, mostly in three or four parts, using melodic fragments reminiscent of parts of the Bach. The second section is a slightly quicker *andante*, in which active figures give way to more poignant gestures.

© Ian Pace 2025.

MICHAEL NYMAN, *Nyman's Goldberg* (2018).

I first really came to know Michael Nyman personally after inviting him to give the first Distinguished Lecture in Music at City in 2018, which was a wonderful occasion. We had corresponded before then after making contact on social media. Following the lecture we remained in regular contact, and started undertaking some interviews for a

projected book, for which I travelled (with my wife Lindsay) to his apartment in Milan, just a week before the COVID-19 pandemic hit that city especially then everywhere else. Sadly this was the last time I saw him in person, and he is now very unwell. We continued some of the interviews online, and whilst they remain fragmentary I do hope to publish them at some point.

He was very keen for me to premiere his new piece after the Bach Goldberg Variations, which we discussed at length (including a little input from me suggesting increasing the amount of repetitions, to bring the work somewhat more into line with some of his other output). He was also very very keen to be featured alongside Michael Finnissy. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to fulfil both of these wishes tonight.

Nyman's Goldberg consists of 30 continuously-running pieces corresponding to Bach's 30 variations. Each one opens with the first bar of that variation (except for nos. 1 and 18 which precede this with the opening of the aria). Then each is 16 bars long (rather than Bach's 32) so each begins in G and ends in D (always ending with the 16th bar from the corresponding variation), thus creating a cadence into the next. Within each piece Nyman shifts between bars extracted from across the cycle, but always corresponding to the same bar number, so that the bassline is preserved and the individual works have a harmonic coherence. Almost every bar has a different tempo too (between quaver 72 and quaver 144), which adds to the pianistic challenges. Then the material is set into relief through the use of repetitions (especially drawing upon material from variation 29, but also regularly variation 14, and then a few others), which breaks up the regularity, as if the music is occasionally 'locked' in momentarily. Nyman also adds a whole range of articulations and accentuations, some of them somewhat counter-intuitive, creating new syncopations and the like, and occasionally makes other small changes and brings in some doublings. The result is as quintessentially Nyman as it is Bach, and constitutes a unique take on the work in ways reminiscent of his reworkings of Mozart in *In Re Don Giovanni* (1977), Purcell in the score for Peter Greenaway's *The Draughtsman's Contract* (1982), John Bull in the First String Quartet (1985), or Mozart again in the score for *Drowning by Numbers* (1988).

© Ian Pace 2025.

IAN PACE is a pianist of long-established reputation, specialising in the farthest reaches of musical modernism and transcendental virtuosity, as well as a writer and musicologist focusing on issues of music, culture, performance, society and the avant-garde. He was born in Hartlepool, England in 1968, and studied at Chetham's School of Music, The Queen's College, Oxford and, as a Fulbright Scholar, at the Juilliard School in New York, later completing his PhD, on the origins of post-war German new music and its infrastructure under occupation, at Cardiff University. His main piano teacher, and a major influence upon his work, was the Hungarian pianist György Sándor, a student of Bartók.

Based in London since 1993, he has pursued an active international career, performing in 27 countries and at most major European venues and festivals. His

absolutely vast repertoire of all periods focuses particularly upon music of the 20th and 21st Century. He has given world premieres of over 300 piano works, including works by Patrícia de Almeida, Gilbert Amy, Julian Anderson, Richard Barrett, Konrad Boehmer, Luc Brewaeys, Aaron Cassidy, James Clarke, James Dillon, Pascal Dusapin, Richard Emsley, James Erber, Brian Ferneyhough, Michael Finnissy (whose complete piano works he performed in a landmark 6-concert series in 1996, and then again in an 11-concert series in 2016-17), Christopher Fox, Sam Hayden, Volker Heyn, Wieland Hoban, Evan Johnson, Maxim Kolomiets, André Laporte, Hilda Paredes, Alwynne Pritchard, Horatiu Radulescu, Lauren Redhead, Frederic Rzewski, Thoma Simaku, Howard Skempton, Michael Spencer, Gerhard Stäbler, Yuji Takahashi, Serge Verstockt, Hermann Vogt, Marc Yeats, Alistair Zaldúa and Walter Zimmermann. He has presented cycles of works including Stockhausen's *Klavierstücke I-X*, and the piano works of Ferneyhough, Fox, Kagel, Ligeti, Lachenmann, Messiaen, Radulescu, Rihm, Rzewski and Skempton. In 2022 he gave a cycle in London of the nine symphonies of Beethoven as transcribed by Liszt. He has played with orchestras including the Orchestre de Paris under Christoph Eschenbach (with whom he premiered and recorded Dusapin's piano concerto *À Quia*), the SWF Orchestra in Stuttgart under Rupert Huber, and the Dortmund Philharmonic under Bernhard Kontarsky (with whom he gave a series of very well-received performances of Ravel's Concerto for the Left Hand). He has recorded around 40 CDs; his recording of Michael Finnissy's five-and-a-half hour *The History of Photography in Sound* (of which he gave the world premiere in London in 2001) was released by Divine Art in October 2013 to rave reviews. Recent recordings have included piano music of Marc Yeats, the complete piano works of Sam Hayden, and the complete works of Brian Ferneyhough. Forthcoming recordings include the complete piano works of Horatiu Radulescu, and new recordings of Michael Finnissy and Volker Heyn. Recent concerts have included appearances in Paris, Lisbon, Zürich, at the Ruhrtriennale in Duisburg, Oslo, Prague, Kiev, São Paulo, and around the UK. In 2018, BBC Radio 3 broadcast a special two-hour issue of the programme *Here and Now* devoted to his work, the first time this had been done for a single artist. In June this year he performed in Florianópolis, Brazil to a packed hall seating 900 people and also made his first concert and lecture tour of Japan, playing and lecturing in Tokyo, Kyoto, Fukui and Kumamoto.

He is Professor of Music, Culture and Society and University Advisor: Interdisciplinarity at City, University of London. He worked in the Department of Music from 2010 to 2023, where he was Head of Department from 2020 to 2021, and became a full Professor in 2021. In autumn 2023 he joined the Department of Sociology and Criminology where he now works, as Professor of Music, Culture and Society. He previously held positions at the London College of Music and Media, University of Southampton, Trinity Laban Conservatoire and Dartington College of Arts. His areas of academic expertise include the breadth of 19th, 20th and 21st century art music, 19th century performance practice (especially the work of Liszt and Brahms), musical historiography, contemporary performance practice and issues, music and culture under fascism and communism, the post-1945 avant-garde, in particular in West Germany issues of music and society (with particular reference to the work of Theodor Adorno, the Frankfurt School, and their followers), critical musicology, and music education at secondary and tertiary levels. He co-edited and was a major contributor the volume *Uncommon Ground: The Music of Michael Finnissy*, which was published by Ashgate in 1998, and authored the monograph

Michael Finnissy's *The History of Photography in Sound: A Study of Sources, Techniques and Interpretation*, published by Divine Art in 2013. He has also published many articles in *Music and Letters*, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, *Contemporary Music Review*, *TEMPO*, *The Musical Times*, *The Liszt Society Journal*, *Musiktexte*, *Musik & Ästhetik*, *The Open Space Magazine*, as well as writing for a wider audience in *London Review of Books*, *Times Higher Education*, *The Conversation*, the *Telegraph*, the *Spectator*, *Sex Matters*, *International Piano* and *Music Teacher*, as well as making a series of podcasts. He has recently signed a contract with Reaktion Books to produce a new biography of Karlheinz Stockhausen.

He also contributed chapters to *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance*, edited Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), *Collected Writings of the Orpheus Institute: Unfolding Time: Studies in Temporality in Twentieth-Century Music*, edited Darla Crispin (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2009), *The Modernist Legacy*, edited Björn Heile (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), *Beckett's Proust/Deleuze's Proust*, edited Mary Bryden and Margaret Topping (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), *Writing to Andriessen: Commentaries on Life in Music*, edited Rose Dodd (Amsterdam: Lecturis, 2019) and *The Oxford Handbook of Musical Performance*, edited Gary McPherson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022). The volume *Critical Perspectives on Michael Finnissy: Bright Futures, Dark Pasts*, co-edited with Nigel McBride, was published in 2019, and another on *Researching and Writing on Contemporary Art and Artists: Challenges, Practices, and Complexities*, co-edited with Christopher Wiley, in 2020. Forthcoming edited collections, which will be published in 2025-26, include *Writing on Contemporary Musicians: Promotion, Advocacy, Disinterest, Censure*, also co-edited with Christopher Wiley, and *Rethinking Contemporary Musicology: Perspectives on Interdisciplinarity, Skills and Deskillling*, co-edited with Peter Tregear. Other forthcoming publications include monographs on music in Weimar and post-war Germany, a book on Brahms Performance Practice, and a history of specialist musical education in Britain. He also worked with the director Bettina Ehrhardt on the film *Wir fangen ganz von vorn an: Neue Musik für ein Deutschland nach dem Krieg* (2020).

He is also a thrice-elected trustee of the Society for Music Analysis, for which he is current Awards Officer. He was also a co-founder of City University Academics for Academic Freedom (AFAF), and sits on the advisory board of AFAF, and a founder member of the London Universities' Council for Academic Freedom (LUCAF), of which he is Secretary.

He is also a composer; recent works include *Das hat Rrrrasss...* for speaker and piano (2018); the piano pieces *Thirty for Grace* (2019), *Clothcomposers* (2019) and *Schneeriss* (2020); the cycle for singer and ensemble *Matière: Le palais de la mort* (2021); and *Lancashire Rock* (2022) for clarinet, percussion and piano.