

Francesca Hurst, piano - June 4, 2023

Geenyoch Ballant (“Ravenous Ballad”)

Jennifer Margaret Barker (b. 1965)

BuMian (“Sleepless”)

Sonata in C

Faina Lushtak

Andante irrealmente – Allegro

Andante

Allegro con fuoco

Mazurkas, Op.17

Frederic Chopin (1810-1849)

1. B-flat major

2. E minor

3. A-flat major

4. A minor

Gustave Le Gray

Caroline Shaw (b. 1982)

Moana

J. M. Barker

Old and New

F. Lushtak

Recognized for her “quicksilver passagework” and “tender lyricism” yet not afraid to shout, swing her foot onto the piano, or don fingerless gloves if the music demands it, pianist **Francesca Hurst** divides her playing between classical and contemporary music. Classically trained, she fell into the new music scene in 2013 when she stepped in last minute for a gig with Great Noise Ensemble. At ease with a wide range of repertoire, she makes sense of the music regardless of style and period, is passionate about communicating with her audiences, and has a special interest in performing music by women. During the pandemic, she created the 100-day online video series Daily Dose of Piano, which featured music from the Baroque to today, including 14 premieres.

As a new music pianist, Francesca has appeared as a solo and collaborative guest artist at festivals like the Atlantic Music Festival, New Music Delaware, New Music Gathering, Charlotte New Music Festival, and the Bang on a Can Music Marathon. She has performed and premiered music by composers like Martin Bresnick, Alexandra Gardner, and others. She has played in such venues as the Kennedy Center, the National Gallery of Art, and the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC, and internationally in Bulgaria, Italy, Portugal, and most recently in France. Equally versatile in the classical repertoire, she was just named to the 2023-2024 Performing Artist Touring Roster of the Virginia Commission for the Arts. She is currently touring a program of music by women in the mid-Atlantic and will be recording an album with these works later this month.

Francesca is on the piano faculty at The Catholic University of America and maintains a thriving private piano studio. She is an MTNA Nationally Certified Teacher of Music, a member of the College Music Society, Musicians Club of Women, Music Teachers National Association, and a MusicLink Foundation teacher. She holds a DMA, MM, and BFA in Piano Performance, and a BA in Italian.

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Program Notes

Geenyoch Ballant (2003) was written for the 2003 American Liszt Society conference. The title is in the Scots language. Geenyoch means 'ravenous' or 'insatiable' and ballant means 'ballad'. Scottish-American composer Jennifer Margaret Barker wrote this piece as an homage to the great piano masterpieces of the nineteenth century.

BuMian (2001) was inspired by a trip Jennifer Barker took to Hong Kong in 2007. The title is in Mandarin, and translates as 'sleepless'. The piece reflects the busyness and restlessness she observed there.

Faina Lushtak's **Sonata in C** is a three-movement work composed in Moscow in 1974. The New York Times hailed it as "a striking, eclectic essay... that embodied hints of jazz and a touch of bittersweet Russian humor."

The **Op.17 Mazurkas** of Frederic Chopin, composed in 1832-33, are some of his most popular and performed mazurkas, especially No.4 in A minor.

Gustave Le Gray (2012)

"Gustave Le Gray was a 19th century French photographer who mastered the technique of developing seascape photographs by using separate negatives for the ocean and the sky" (icareifyoulisten.com).

"Gustave Le Gray is a multi-layered portrait of Op.17 #4 using some of Chopin's ingredients overlaid and hinged together with my own." – Caroline Shaw

The opening tempo indication reads: "like a photograph slowly developing on waxed paper."

Moana (2011) is another piece inspired by Jennifer Barker's 2007 travels. The title means 'ocean', 'sea', 'large lake' in Maori, and was inspired by the streams, rivers, waterfalls, lakes and oceans of southeast Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand. She was especially struck by the beauty of all of the water she encountered, and by how much it resembled Scotland.

Old and New (1991) was commissioned by the New Orleans International Piano Competition, and displays the ease with which Faina Lushtak combines classical and jazz styles into one seamless work.

Scan this code to read more about Gustave Le Gray:

