

# yasmin rowe piano

J.S. BACH | PROKOFIEV | SCHUMANN | GRANADOS



**JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)**

<b>Three-part Inventions (Sinfonias), BWV 787-801</b>	<b>26:49</b>
1. I. Sinfonia No. 1 in C major, BWV 787	1:09
2. II. Sinfonia No. 2 in C minor, BWV 788	2:15
3. III. Sinfonia No. 3 in D major, BWV 789	1:06
4. IV. Sinfonia No. 4 in D minor, BWV 790	2:08
5. V. Sinfonia No. 5 in E flat major, BWV 791	2:22
6. VI. Sinfonia No. 6 in E major, BWV 792	1:06
7. VII. Sinfonia No. 7 in E minor, BWV 793	2:30
8. VIII. Sinfonia No. 8 in F major, BWV 794	1:05
9. IX. Sinfonia No. 9 in F minor, BWV 795	4:35
10. X. Sinfonia No. 10 in G major, BWV 796	1:07
11. XI. Sinfonia No. 11 in G minor, BWV 797	2:06
12. XII. Sinfonia No. 12 in A major, BWV 798	1:22
13. XIII. Sinfonia No. 13 in A minor, BWV 799	1:19
14. XIV. Sinfonia No. 14 in B flat major, BWV 800	1:06
15. XV. Sinfonia No. 15 in B minor, BWV 801	1:33

**SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891-1953)**

<b>Piano Sonata No. 6 in A major, Op. 82</b>	<b>28:10</b>
16. I. Allegro moderato	8:20
17. II. Allegretto	5:01
18. III. Tempo di valzer lentissimo	7:24
19. IV. Vivace	7:25

**JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750) transcr. EGON PETRI (1881-1962)**

20. Sheep May Safely Graze (Cantata, BWV 208)	4:57
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**ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810-1856)**

21. Arabesque in C major, Op. 18	7:33
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**ENRIQUE GRANADOS (1867-1916)**

22. Allegro de concierto, Op. 46	9:16
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**TOTAL TIME: 76:51**

'Straightforward instruction, whereby lovers of the keyboard, and especially those eager to learn, are shown original ideas and their pleasing development, and most of all the opportunity to acquire a *cantabile* style of playing while at the same time receiving a strong foretaste of composition.' With this sentence Bach indicated the intent of the **Inventions and Sinfonias** in his 1723 manuscript: the joining of pleasure, keyboard technique and stylistic rigour. Music had been the principal livelihood of the Bach family for at least five generations. With the composition of the Three-part Inventions in 1720, J.S. Bach is linked to the energies he devoted to the education of his children (which eventually numbered twenty, half surviving into adulthood).

His eldest son, Wilhelm Friedemann, was then nine years old – the same age as Bach had been when he began his own formal studies. After Bach had introduced notation and finger exercises to his son, he got him to copy out some of his Preludes from the *Well-Tempered Clavier* that he was composing at the time. This exercise was abandoned as Wilhelm's hand was then unable to stay within the page, and Bach created fifteen pieces in strict counterpoint for him to study and play. In 1723, shortly before becoming Cantor in Leipzig, Bach returned to Wilhelm Friedemann's notebook and gave them the titles *Inventio and Sinfonia* - the latter name being a generic short instrumental composition, and the former being a concept of the Italian Renaissance to indicate that creation of the music arose out of original, rather than borrowed, ideas. Despite the didactic nature and relative simplicity of these works, they crystallise J.S. Bach's supreme command of counterpoint – inspiring the player's imagination with their intriguing use of invertible counterpoint (where the melodies sound equally well whether above or below other lines).

The so-called 'War Sonatas' (Nos. 6, 7 and 8) were composed between 1939 and 1944. The Soviet Union had signed a non-aggression Pact with Nazi Germany before it was overturned by Hitler's massive invasion in 1941. Essentially these are not programmatic works, and indeed the title 'War Sonatas' is a Western one. Despite

this, Prokofiev's triptych is a powerful mirror of its time, and it is difficult not to hear the horrors of war imprinted on them. There is an uncompromising musicality and pianistic approach that links them together: stamina and physical strength create a type of ruthlessness to the musical ideas, and yet these are nested amongst exquisite soaring melodies. The modernity of the gestures – the twisted cadences, brutish accents, the impish rhythms and turns of phrase – all arise from a traditional form, the sonata-form first movement, second movement scherzo, slow third, and rondo finale. Sergei Prokofiev premiered his **Piano Sonata No. 6 in A major, Op. 82** in Moscow in 1940. One wonders how the audience reacted to the unrushed opening *motto*: a series of falling notes that creates a mesmerising and colourful bitonal effect, stutteringly repeated almost forty more times in the exposition. The *motto* breaks through the calmness to then return with almost unbearable brutality in the recapitulation, making its anguish and terror known through almost the entire range of seven octaves. Even the two inner movements – the humorous and at times mysterious pulsation of the second, and the touchingly vulnerable waltz-like of the third – cannot calm the *motto* of the first, which scampers through the *toccata* finale, becoming increasingly haunted by its demons in its breathless conclusion.

Perhaps one of Bach's most enduring soprano arias, *Schafer können sicher weiden* (**Sheep May Safely Graze**) is taken from his 1713 cantata *Was mir behagt, ist nur die muntre Jagd* (*The merry hunt is all that I love*) BWV 208. As a result, it has been frequently transcribed throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century – here in 1944 by the eminent Dutch pianist Egon Petri, a disciple of Ferruccio Busoni, bringing out the piano's resonance in such a way as to weave a hypnotic but idyllic, and perhaps carefree, moment.

In publishing works aimed at a broad public, Robert Schumann is a composer who hides intricacy of design and flight of imagination behind unassuming titles and forms. Indeed, his compositions were known for being experimental and complex

– baffling to audiences, controversial to colleagues, and at times even too much for Clara. During the time of Robert Schumann's courtship of Clara von Weick, from 1835, works such as *Kreisleriana* and the *Fantaisie* all suffered setbacks from the view of selling to the public. Always thinking pragmatically, Clara was well aware that their union would need them to think carefully about their future. In light of this she suggested simplifications and reconsiderations of his music, chiefly to address financial insecurities. The **Arabesque in C major, Op. 18** was thought of as a 'little rondo', which he said was 'written for the ladies' of Vienna in the autumn of 1838. Schumann was always dismissive of the *Arabesque*, calling it 'feeble' – but whether this can be taken in faith, or whether this is the grumble of someone who is being obliged to work under the dictates of finance, is open to question. Alternating sections of refrain and contrasting episodes swirl though a work which eludes a naïve and delightful opening melodic opening. As would be inspired by the title, an *arabesque* is an ornament or intricate pattern inspired by Arab architecture - this is a melody that although remains unchanged at each appearance, is duly reassessed by us following each magical interruption cast by Schumann's musical sorcery.

Enrique Granados' exuberant showpiece, **Allegro de concierto, Op. 46** (composed in 1903) was submitted to a composition competition at the Royal Conservatory in Madrid, taking the first prize and 500 pesetas – a substantial prize sum at the time. Up against him was the young composer Manuel de Falla. It is a work that is highly unusual for Granados in the way that he seizes the opportunity to imbue sonata-form with Lisztian virtuosity. The lack of distinctively Spanish or folkloric material did nothing to dampen the incredible appeal of the work, as it thrust him to the status of a national celebrity. It reflects the confidence, optimism and effervescent energy of a composer witnessing intense musical transformation in Barcelona's society: and the thrill of playing the work today gives cause for that energy to continue being shared amongst us.

Pianist **Yasmin Rowe** has earned critical acclaim as a soloist, collaborator and recording artist in Europe, Asia and Australia. As well as her concert hall recitals, she gives many live-to-air performances, appearing as a frequent guest on Melbourne-based 3MBS Radio since 2019.

Yasmin is a graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music in the UK. She received a BMus with first class honours and subsequently an MMus with distinction under the tutelage of Murray McLachlan and Stephen Savage. In 2014, she was one of only four selected instrumentalists to receive an International Artist Diploma from the RNCM.

Yasmin has appeared as a feature soloist with numerous orchestras including Pro Musica, Stonnington Symphony Orchestra and the Manchester Camerata, as well as guest principal pianist with Orchestra Victoria and celeste player with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

She has given performances at leading concert hall venues including the Wigmore and Bridgewater Halls, the Wuxi Grand Theatre, the Shanghai and Forbidden City Concert Halls, Melba Hall, Hanson Dyer Hall and the Melbourne Recital Centre.

In addition to her solo recitals, Yasmin enjoys maintaining her diverse portfolio as a chamber musician. This includes her performances with the duo Y-Squared, and the trios Rock Paper Scissors and Collide. In 2021, Yasmin was honoured to be the recipient of the Australian Geoffrey Parsons Award for collaborative piano.

Described as 'thrilling', Yasmin's debut solo album for Willowhayne Records was selected as the BBC Music Magazine Editor's Choice in September 2016. She made her second album with the cellist Yelian He and both these albums were later included as a highlight of British Airways' long-haul flight entertainment system.

In 2021, Yasmin was featured on the ABC Classic label with *And Other Lines*, a seven-movement work written for her, oboist Briana Leaman and saxophonist Joseph Lallo by Melbourne composer Luke Severn.

In 2022 she was a Laureate of the Australian National Piano Award.

