



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

**Karolina Rimskyte, piano**

Sunday, October 15, 2023

1:00 pm

PepsiCo Recital Hall

**Program**

Piano Sonata in G Major, K. 283

*Allegro*  
*Andante*  
*Presto*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
(1756–1791)

Six Dances in Bulgarian Rhythm  
from *Mikrokosmos, Volume VI*

Béla Bartók  
(1881–1945)

*Intermission*

Piazone

Alexej Gerassimez  
(1987-present)

Josh Faust, vibrophone

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Undergraduate in Piano Pedagogy. Karolina Rimskyte is a student of Harold Martina.

The use of recording equipment or taking photographs is prohibited.  
Please silence all electronic devices including watches, pagers, and phones.



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## Program Notes

*Dear listener,*

Thank you for joining me this afternoon. I've always enjoyed making music in collaboration with other instrumentalists. However, during my time at Texas Christian University, I also grew to love presenting music solo. Today, I'm thrilled to introduce my interpretations of Mozart, Bartok, and Gerassimez. I hope you find it engaging.

### **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's - Piano Sonata No. 5 in G major**

*"Mozart was always good-humored, but even at his more good-humored he was very pensive, looking one straight in the eye the while, pondering his answer to any question... and yet he seemed the while to be working away deep in thought at something quite efferent. Even when he was washing his hands when he rose in the morning, he walked up and down in the room the while, never standing still, tapped one heel against the other the while and was always deep in thought."*  
- Sophie Weber Haibel, Mozart's sister-in-law (Deutsch)

Today, I begin with Mozart's Piano Sonata in G Major, K. 283, composed during his visit to Munich in 1774-1775. The sonata, comprising three movements, highlights Mozart's musical and piano prowess. The first movement's melodic richness, typical of Mozart, is evident in its dialogue between folk-like themes and intricate rhythmic patterns, such as the baroque hemiola rhythm. Mozart's signature technique of ornamented unison passages adds brilliance and resonance to the piano, a characteristic in many of his compositions (Henle).

While modest, the Andante in C major gains impact through subtle nuances, especially by highlighting the repeated notes in the theme. Unlike the first movement's sonata-form structure, the second movement follows a more traditional 19th-century development style, presenting the subject first in the right hand and then in the lower register.

The Sonata ends with a brilliant Presto movement, showcasing Mozart's virtuosity. In a typical Mozartian style, he adds humor by teasing the audience with the word "Coda" in the score, hinting at an elaborate finale. Contrary to expectations, the piece concludes with just two chords, adding a playful twist to the ending (Trollope). This is my favorite trait of Mozart - just when you expect the music to go a certain way, he takes it in the opposite direction, creating unexpected and delightful musical twists.

Mozart holds a special place in my heart because he was the first composer I delved into during high school. His adventurous life, playful music, and impact on opera reform captivated me. Studying at the Lithuanian Music and Theater Academy, I discovered his genius in operas, where he skillfully evoked sympathy for complex

characters like Don Giovanni. What amazed me most was how Mozart allowed listeners to decide their stance, showcasing a profound empathy for the human experience beyond the popular image of him.

### **Béla Bartók - Six Dances in Bulgarian Rhythm from Mikrokosmos VI**

*“Debussy's great service to music was to re-awaken among all musicians an awareness of harmony and its possibilities. In that, he was just as important as Beethoven, who revealed to us meaning of progressive form, and as Bach who showed us the transcendent significance of counterpoint ... Now, what I am always asking myself is this: is it possible to make a synthesis of these three great masters, a living synthesis that will be valid for our own time?”*

*- Béla Bartók in an interview with Serge Moreux in 1939 (Cross)*

When exploring the synthesis of harmony, forms, rhythms, and folk melodies in the contemporary world, Béla Bartók's contributions cannot be overlooked. I'll be performing Six Dances in Bulgarian Rhythm by Béla Bartók, which is part of his Mikrokosmos collection from 1940. Bartók created Mikrokosmos for his son Peter, making it a remarkable compilation of contemporary piano techniques, harmonies, and folk melodies. This collection, titled "the universe is small," highlights Bartók's expertise in blending various influences. The specific dances I'll be performing were dedicated to Miss Harriet Cohen, a renowned British pianist known for her dedication to Tudor composers' music and her art collection at the Royal Music Academy (Trollope). These dances vividly display Bartók's deep connection to Balkan folk music, incorporating diverse rhythms and melodies.

#### **What is a Bulgarian rhythm?**

"Bulgarian" rhythm, as explored by Bartók, revolves around the consistent use of asymmetrical meter throughout a piece. In Bartók's rendition, unlike folk examples, the rapid eighth-note pulse is nearly always present, with rare moments where it transforms into the intriguing "lame" (Vikárius, p. 55) rhythm, as seen in the Sixth Dance. Here, listeners might perceive a shortening of the third note rather than an irregular lengthening of the first two notes. In his lecture on April 6, 1938, just two months after the first performance of the Dances in London, Béla Bartók discussed "The So-called Bulgarian Rhythm," later published as an article. The lecture was aimed at music educators, and Bartók emphasized the importance of introducing Bulgarian rhythms to young music students. He expressed concern that skilled orchestral players might struggle with even simpler rhythmic patterns without this exposure. Bartók highlighted the challenge faced by orchestral musicians in Frankfurt when confronted with his transcriptions of Romanian peasant music for violin earlier in the lecture.

#### **Dance No. 1 - Time signature 4+2+3 (9/8)**

The first dance in the series stands out for its reflective nature, incorporating slower sections that encourage contemplation and diverse exploration of soundscapes. Softer, slower interludes punctuate dance-like segments. The structural design of this piece reminds me of Prokofiev's Sarcasm No. 3, Op. 17, another composer and composition I appreciate.

### **Dance No. 2 - Time signature 2+2+4 (8/8)**

This dance's metric irregularity and brisk tempo create a captivating rhythmic energy. The three-bar introduction establishes the piece's rhythmic core, infusing the music with a sense of tension. Bartók employs heterophony, where a single melody is simultaneously varied, dividing it between the left and right hands, separated by an eighth note. Finally, the recurring rhythmic motif forms the heart of the coda, gradually fading as the music recedes into the distance.

### **Dance No. 3 - Time signature 2+3 (5/8)**

This dance continues and responds to the second one, maintaining its high energy while incorporating more force and intensity. It begins with a brief introduction of the dance rhythm theme, followed by the introduction of the melodic line. The theme development peaks through the imitation technique, with Bartók presenting the theme in both hands, the left hand slightly offset by three eighth notes.

### **Dance No. 4 - Time signature 3+2+3 (8/8)**

This dance prominently features the rhythmic influence of Balkan folk traditions, initially evoking a skipping or hopping dance that gradually transforms into an almost exuberant stomping. Despite the clear inspiration from traditional Bulgarian dances in the rhythm, the melodic content is entirely Bartók's original creation. Notably, he described this dance as having a Gershwin-like style but with his distinctive tonality, infusing a touch of jazz with a pronounced emphasis on the fourth beat of each bar. The melody takes on various forms throughout the piece, including solo passages in both hands, inversions, unison passages, repeated notes, octaves, and sixths. Bartók also employs bitonality and polytonality, blending multiple keys concurrently, which introduces dissonant harmonic progressions despite the piece being in C major. This technique imparts an exotic and piquant flavor to the composition.

### **Dance No. 5 - Time signature 2+2+2+3 (9/8)**

Similar to the second dance, this piece moves rapidly and gracefully but carries a more playful and less extravagant tone. An interesting alteration in the Fifth Dance highlights a fundamental characteristic of Bartók's "Bulgarian" music. The middle segment of the piece unexpectedly becomes melodious, almost melancholic, forming the sole thematic section of the composition. Bartók's recorded performance showcases distinct touches for melodic, ornamental, and accompanying notes, emphasizing his meticulous attention to nuances.

### **Dance No. 6 - Time signature 3+3+2 (8/8)**

With driving energy from start to finish, the sixth dance pulls together echoes of the melodic material from the other dances, closing the piece with a grand flourish. In this dance, we also face the synthesis of all the dances we heard up to this point - echoed voice leading ideas, character, technique, particular way he chooses to fill in different intervals (tritones, 7ths, etc.), and rhythmic motives.

Bartók fascinates me not only because of his compositional genius. Starting with my Music theory and critics studies in Lithuania, he fascinated me as an ethnomusicologist. Bartók found inspiration in Transylvanian singer Lidi Dosa, who sang 'Piros Alma' (translated as 'Red Apple'). His pivotal moment came when he collaborated with Zoltán Kodály (another inspiring pedagogue), collecting folk music using an Edison machine. They meticulously studied and classified individual folk songs, recording

hundreds of cylinders. Bartók extensively researched folk music from Hungary, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Serbia, and Turkey. He incorporated various elements from these traditions into his own compositions.

### Alexej Gerassimez - Piazonore

*“Tango is not just about dancing. It is a music of deep undercurrents. And Piazzolla’s tangos have the great strength of true voice. ... Piazzolla’s music is endlessly passionate—full of yearning—and, at the same time tremendously contemporary. ... He actually took the tango to another level by inhabiting his music. The music grew in him, and he adeptly incorporated the influences of his surroundings—whether from New York, Paris, or Buenos Aires. ... Because of this experimentation, and also his ingenuity, focus, and hard work, his music has many levels of expression and a tremendous depth. His is a truly successful synthesis of the tango and the contemporary.”*

- Yo-Yo-Ma (Judd)

To conclude, my friend Josh Faust and I will present *Piazonore*, composed by Alexej Gerassimez. The composer initially intended to arrange Astor Piazzolla's famous *Libertango* for vibraphone and piano but ended up improvising and restructuring the material. The result, titled *Piazonore*, retains the spirit of Piazzolla's music but has transformed into something entirely new, moving away from the original tango form. The piece is a playful and adventurous creation, urging listeners not to take it too seriously and to enjoy the experience.

My love for collaborative performances began with Astor Piazzolla's *Invierno Porteño* from *The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires for Piano Trio* (adapted for accordion, violin, and piano), which I had the pleasure of performing during my last year of high school. The performance celebrates collaboration, particularly in percussion, and the friendship with Josh. Our focus has always been on making music, allowing us to enjoy every rehearsal without worrying about playing the "right notes." Enjoy the experience with us.

***Thank you for your time and have a good rest of your day!***

### Resources

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- “Mozart Piano Sonatas.” *Henle*, [www.henle.de/us/navigation/dfcc225477694824aa95be646d983a4d](http://www.henle.de/us/navigation/dfcc225477694824aa95be646d983a4d). Accessed 13 Oct. 2023.
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