

# MATEI VARGA

PIANIST

“IT IS HARD TO FIND THE RIGHT WORDS TO DESCRIBE THE BEAUTY OF HIS PLAYING...” - PAOLO ISOTTA



Matei Varga is the 2021 recipient of the Romanian - American Fine Arts Award, conferred by the Romanian government. His artistry has garnered superlative reviews from critics around the world, who have found his performances “magical” (Süddeutsche Zeitung), “colorful, vivacious [and] engaging” (Le Diapason). A top prizewinner at the “George Enescu”, “Maria Canals”, and “Cidade do Porto” international piano competitions, Mr. Varga has appeared as a soloist and recitalist in many of the world’s leading concert halls, among them Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall in New York City, Konzerthaus Berlin, Palau de la Musica in Barcelona, the Romanian Atheneum in Bucharest, Victoria Hall in Geneva and the Auditorium du Louvre, Salle Cortot and Salle Gaveau in Paris. He was invited by Gian Carlo Menotti to appear at the “Festival dei Due Mondi” in Spoleto and was awarded the “Salon de Virtuosi” Career Grant in New York.

He has collaborated with conductors such as Otto-Werner Mueller, Elio Boncompagni, Christian Reif, Gabriel Bebe-selea, and frequently accompanied the great Romanian soprano Mariana Nicolesco. Mr. Varga studied with Ana Pitis, Ioana Minei and Sandu Sandrin at the National University of Music in Bucharest, and with Pavlina Dokovska at Mannes College. He now lives in New York City and is Artistic Director of the Vendome Prize, a piano award described by Le Figaro as “the world’s most prestigious competition” and currently presented by the College of Performing Arts at The New School.

Mr. Varga's discography includes releases for Naxos, Sono Luminus and Coviello Classics.

# **PRESS**

"With his infectious enthusiasm and seemingly effortless technique, Varga makes light work of soaring leaps, cascading runs at breakneck speed and delightful trills, all with precise attention to detail."

*Lisa MacKinney, Limelight*

"[A] grand and wonderfully lugubrious new release from the young Romanian pianist Matei Varga... [Dumitrescu's] nine piano preludes recorded here are largely vivacious and full of dense keyboard intricacies that Varga exploits splendidly... Janáček's swirling, Impressionist masterpiece...gets an appealingly fluid performance. The slow movement of Bach's D-Minor Concerto...closes out the disc like a serene funeral benediction."

*Joshua Kosman, San Francisco Chronicle*

"[an] excellent pianist"

*Robert Gottlieb, The New York Observer*

"The performances are exquisite... they show a fine sense of shaping a lyrical melodic line with perfect tonal control"

*Rob Haskins, American Record Guide*

"[H]is every phrase conveyed intelligence and a burning sense of musical mission. . . . Mr. Varga played with consummate care and fidelity without ever sounding fussy or pedantic . . . listeners were rapt, utterly motionless and silent. . . . there was clearly an exceptional mind at work."

*Rorianne Schrade, New York Concert Review*

# 2023-24 RECITAL PROGRAMS

## Iconic Beethoven

(Homage to Mariana Nicolesco)

*I will never forget Mariana Nicolesco's performance of "Ah! Perfido"! I felt then as if Beethoven was speaking directly to us, through that magnificent voice: dark, mystical, otherworldly and yet incredibly warm... Many years later, when Ms. Nicolesco asked me to prepare a recital of Beethoven Sonatas for the 25th anniversary of the "Hariclea Darclée" Festival - and Beethoven's own 250th - it seemed perfectly natural to present these works in a setting primarily dedicated to the human voice. Sadly, Covid hit and the event was postponed - and tragically, a year later Mariana went to sing to the angels. So this is a program that never happened the way it was intended, which makes it even more cathartic and personal.*

### Piano Sonata No. 8 in C minor, Op. 13 "Pathétique"

Grave - Allegro  
Adagio cantabile  
Rondo: Allegro

### Piano Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp minor, Op. 27 No. 2 "Moonlight"

Adagio sostenuto  
Allegretto  
Presto agitato

### Piano Sonata No. 23 in F minor, Op. 57 "Appassionata"

Allegro assai  
Andante con moto  
Allegro ma non troppo - Presto

## The Year That Never Was

*The year 2020 was complicated indeed... Many suffered from isolation and the inability to socialize... but I found that staying home and playing the piano in my own "salon de musique" offered me the joy of a new discovery, that of the Cuban master Ernesto Lecuona. I decided to bring forward some of my favorite pieces from Lecuona's catalogue, intertwined with other short salon pieces by well-established composers such as Chopin, Balakirev and Gershwin - all of them masters of the miniature genre and proud exponents of their own national style. Salon music often gets a bad rep, but even the great Beethoven didn't shy away from the charm and atmosphere of a starlit night...*

### Ernesto Lecuona (1895 - 1963)

Andalucia  
Malagueña  
19th Century Cuban Dances (selections)  
Danza Lucumi  
Zambra Gitana  
Yo Te Quiero Siempre  
Vals Azul

### Frederic Chopin (1810 - 1849)

Fantaisie-Impromptu Op. 66, in C-sharp minor  
Trois Ecossaises, Op. 72 No. 3

### George Gershwin (1898 - 1937)

I Got Rhythm  
The Man I Love

### Domenico Scarlatti (1685 - 17)

Keyboard Sonata K 380, in E major

### Andrei Tudor (b. 1983)

Rondo alla Crazy

### Edward Elgar (1857 - 1934)

Salut d'Amour, Op. 12

### Mily Balakirev (1837 - 1910)

Spanish Melody

### Gioachino Rossini (1792 - 1868)

Sins of Old Age (selections)



# The French Connection



*What is the French style? And how can a Romanian (Enescu) and a German (Bach) pay homage to it, while remaining deeply, unapologetically themselves? Enescu adored Bach - and performed many of his solo violin works as no one else... He also spent most of his life in France, in many ways shaping the landscape of French Classical music during the first half of the 20th century. And yet, there is something so quintessentially Romanian in Enescu's musical language, the same way in which Bach's is unmistakably German... But in this program they are both exploring the ineffable "je ne sais quoi"...*

## **George Enescu (1881 - 1955)**

Suite No. 1 for Piano, Op. 3 "dans le style ancien" (1897)

*Prelude*

*Fugue*

*Adagio*

*Finale*

## **Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)**

French Suite No. 2 in C minor, BWV 813

*Allemande*

*Courante*

*Sarabande*

*Air*

*Minuet*

*Minuet - Trio*

*Gigue*

*Prelude*

## **Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)**

French Suite No. 3 in B minor, BWV 814

*Allemande*

*Courante*

*Sarabande*

*Angloise*

*Minuet - Trio*

*Gigue*

## **George Enescu (1881 - 1955)**

Suite No. 2 for Piano, Op. 10 "Des cloches sonores" (1901-03)

*Toccata*

*Sarabande*

*Pavane*

*Bourrée*

# Concertos



## **Haydn**

Concerto for piano and orchestra in D major

## **Mozart**

Concerto for piano and orchestra K 466 in D minor

## **Beethoven**

Concerto for piano and orchestra no. 1, op. 15 in C major

Concerto for piano and orchestra no. 4, op. 58 in G major

## **Chopin**

Concerto for piano and orchestra no. 1, op. 11 in E minor

Concerto for piano and orchestra no. 2, op. 21 in F minor

## **Schumann**

Concerto for piano and orchestra op.54 in A minor

## **Liszt**

Concerto for piano and orchestra no. 1 in E flat major

## **Brahms**

Concerto for piano and orchestra no. 1 in D minor

## **Tchaikovsky**

Concerto for piano and orchestra no. 1 in B flat minor

## **Bartok**

Concerto for piano and orchestra no. 3 in E major, Sz. 119

## **Lipatti**

Three Romanian Dances for piano and orchestra

## **Hersch**

Piano Concerto no. 2 „Along the Ravines”

# MEDIA

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Matei Varga performs "Vals Azul" by Ernesto Lecuona



Matei Varga plays Frederic Chopin - Fantaisie Impromptu, Op 66



Matei Varga plays Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata (3rd movement)



Matei Varga plays Brahms Piano Concerto no 1, 3rd movement

MORE

*MV*  
MATEI VARGA  
*pianist*



[www.MateiVarga.com](http://www.MateiVarga.com)

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