

**JONATHAN BISS**  
Piano

**Biography (Long)**

Jonathan Biss is a world-renowned pianist who channels his deep musical curiosity into performances and projects in the concert hall and beyond. In addition to performing with today's leading orchestras, he continues to expand his reputation as a teacher, musical thinker, and one of the great Beethoven interpreters of our time. Mr. Biss was recently named Co-Artistic Director alongside Mitsuko Uchida at the Marlboro Music Festival, where he has spent thirteen summers. He also leads a massive open online course (MOOC) via Coursera, which has reached more than 150,000 people from nearly every country in the world. He has written extensively about the music he plays, and has authored three e-books, including *Beethoven's Shadow*, the first Kindle Single written by a classical musician, published by Rosetta Books in 2011.

For more than a decade, he has fully immersed himself in the music of Beethoven, exploring the composer's works and musical thought through a wide variety of projects, several of which culminate in 2019-20. Mr. Biss's recital repertoire this season is almost exclusively focused on the Beethoven piano sonatas, with complete, seven-program sonata cycles at London's Wigmore Hall, Berkeley's Hertz Hall, the new McKnight Center for the Performing Arts at Oklahoma State University, and Wells Cathedral School in Somerset, U.K. In recent seasons he has performed complete cycles at the Aspen and Ravinia festivals and in recitals presented by the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. In addition to these complete cycles, he performs sonata recitals and mini-cycles around the U.S. this season, including at the Perelman Theater in Philadelphia, 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y in New York, The Phillips Collection in Washington, DC, and Meany Hall in Seattle, as well as abroad in Rome, Budapest, Sydney, and Melbourne.

In 2011, Mr. Biss set out on a journey to record the composer's 32 piano sonatas on nine discs over nine years, and the project concludes with the final volume to be released in the fall of 2019 and a complete box set scheduled for release in 2020, both on Orchid Classics. Complementing this cycle is the online Coursera lecture series *Exploring Beethoven's Piano Sonatas*, of which the final two sets of lectures will appear in September and January, at which time all the sonatas will have been examined.

Mr. Biss has taken a different approach to surveying Beethoven's five piano concertos, embarking on a commissioning project, *Beethoven/5*, that pairs each Beethoven concerto with a new concerto composed in response. Launched in 2015 in partnership with lead commissioner the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, this project has led to the world premieres of Timo Andres's *The Blind Banister*, a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Music, Sally Beamish's *City Stanzas*, Salvatore Sciarrino's *Il Sogno di Stradella*, and Caroline Shaw's *Watermark*. This season, Mr. Biss premieres Brett Dean's *Gneixendorfer Musik* with The Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, performing the concerto in Stockholm alongside the work that inspired it, Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto. He then brings the new commission to the Dresden Philharmonic, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, and the Wrocław Philharmonic in Poland. Additionally, Mr. Biss performs the "Emperor" with orchestras worldwide, including with the Curtis Symphony Orchestra led by Osmo Vänskä at Carnegie Hall and Philadelphia's Kimmel Center as part of a seven-city East Coast U.S. tour.

Throughout his career, Mr. Biss has been an advocate for new music. Prior to *Beethoven/5*, he commissioned *Lunaire Variations* by David Ludwig, *Interlude II* by Leon Kirchner, *Wonderer* by Lewis Spratlan, and Three Pieces for Piano and a concerto by Bernard Rands, which he premiered with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He has also premiered a piano quintet by William Bolcom.

Mr. Biss's projects represent his complete approach to music-making and connecting his audience to his own passion for the music. Previous projects have included an exploration of composers' "Late Style" in various concert programs at Carnegie Hall, the Barbican Centre, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, and San Francisco Performances. He also gave master classes at Carnegie Hall and published the Kindle Single *Coda* on the topic. *Schumann: Under the Influence* was a 30-concert

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exploration of the composer's role in musical history, for which Mr. Biss also recorded Schumann and Dvořák piano quintets with the Elias String Quartet and wrote *A Pianist Under the Influence*.

Mr. Biss represents the third generation in a family of professional musicians that includes his grandmother Raya Garbousova, one of the first well-known female cellists (for whom Samuel Barber composed his Cello Concerto), and his parents, violinist Miriam Fried and violist/violinist Paul Biss. Growing up surrounded by music, Mr. Biss began his piano studies at age six, and his first musical collaborations were with his mother and father. He studied with Evelyne Brancart at Indiana University and with Leon Fleisher at the Curtis Institute of Music, where he is now on faculty and holds the Neubauer Family Chair in Piano Studies. He has since appeared with major orchestras around the world, including in the U.S. with the Los Angeles and New York Philharmonics; the Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco Symphonies; and the Cleveland and Philadelphia Orchestras. In Europe, he has appeared with the BBC Symphony, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, London Philharmonic, Staatskapelle Berlin, Staatskapelle Dresden, and Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, among many other ensembles.

Mr. Biss has been recognized with numerous honors, including the Leonard Bernstein Award presented at the 2005 Schleswig-Holstein Festival, Wolf Trap's Shouse Debut Artist Award, the Andrew Wolf Memorial Chamber Music Award, Lincoln Center's Martin E. Segal Award, an Avery Fisher Career Grant, the 2003 Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award, and the 2002 Gilmore Young Artist Award. His albums for EMI won the Diapason d'Or de l'Année and Edison awards. He was an artist-in-residence on American Public Media's Performance Today and was the first American chosen to participate in the BBC's New Generation Artist program.

For more information, please visit [jonathanbiss.com](http://jonathanbiss.com).

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