

FESTIVALS  
MALTA



# Angela Hewitt Recital

Friday 8 November - 7:30pm  
Archaeology Museum, Valletta

# Angela Hewitt Recital

## Programme

<b>J.S. Bach</b>	Toccatà in C minor, BWV911
<b>Beethoven</b>	Six Variations in F major, Op.34
<b>Beethoven</b>	Eroica Variations, Op.35 (Prometheus Variations)
[interval]	
<b>J.S. Bach</b>	Partita No.1 in B flat major, BWV825
<b>Beethoven</b>	32 Variations on an Original Theme in C minor, WoO.80
<b>J.S. Bach</b>	Italian Concerto, BWV971

## Programme Notes



Johann Sebastian Bach

### JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH:

Toccatà in C minor, BWV 911.

J.S. Bach was famed for his organ playing as well as for his wizardry at the harpsichord and other contemporary keyboard instruments. The piano as we know it now was an instrument still to be developed and one wonders how Bach's works would have really sounded like had the piano existed in his time. One could only speculate and several later composers, such as Busoni, fascinated and deeply respectful of Bach's original keyboard works, tried their expert hand at transcribing them for piano.

During his lifetime, Bach was rather better known as a keyboard virtuoso than composer. In 1705, hoping to succeed the famous Danish-German organist-composer Dietrich Buxtehude as Kapellmeister at Lübeck's famous

*Marienkirche*, Bach walked for 10 days covering 320km from Arnstadt in order to meet Buxtehude, the most famous organ virtuoso before Bach. The endeavour came to nothing because marrying Buxtehude's daughter was conditional to obtaining the post, and Bach did not find the prospect all that attractive. However, Bach left Lübeck not uninfluenced by Buxtehude's *stylus phantasticus*. This is evident in the seven toccatas he composed during his two stays at Weimar between 1705 and 1714. They are distinguished for their youthful, happy virtuoso as well as improvisatory character. The toccata, like many of Bach's compositions was published long after his death: 89 years later in 1839.



Photo by Keith Saunders

### LUDWIG van BEETHOVEN:

- Six Variations in F Major Op. 34.
- Eroica Variations Op. 35 (Prometheus Variations).

Beethoven was a great pianist, a born one, and had it not been for the deafness which struck him so tragically he would have continued his career as pianist as well as composer. Tracing the 20 sets of variations he composed between 1782 (his first published work set on a theme by Dressler) and the famous Op. 120 set (the Diabelli) in 1823, Beethoven showed that by that stage in his life he had carried the possibilities of the piano to its utmost. Twenty years after writing the Dressler variations Beethoven composed his 14th set of piano variations (Op.34) in 1802. The 15th set (Op.35) followed upon its heels. It would best be left to the composer himself to explain:

"I have composed two sets of variations, one consisting of eight variations and the other of thirty. Both sets are worked out in quite a new manner....Each theme is treated in its own way and in a different way from the other one. Usually I have to wait for other people to tell me when I have new ideas, because I never know this myself. But this time – I can assure you that in both these works the method is quite new so far as I am concerned."

There was a time when the Op. 34 variations were better known (if at all) for the way the composer modulated to a different key with every variation. This makes them seem as a link with his earlier modulating Preludes. Very fascinating too is theme n. 5 which forecasts the Funeral March in the Eroica Symphony completed in 1804. Similarly the 15 Variations of Op. 35 are entwined within the Eroica sphere. Their theme is taken from Beethoven's ballet Prometheus, Op. 43, (*Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus*, 1800). Beethoven used it later in the finale of the Eroica Symphony, hence the double nickname Op. 35 carries.

### JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH:

Partita N. 1 in B flat Major, BWV 825.

- i. Præludium
- ii. Allemande
- iii. Sarabande
- iv. Minuet I
- v. Minuet II
- vi. Gigue

This is the first of the Six Partitas BWV 825-830. They were composed between 1725 and 1730 and all six were individually published by 1730. In 1731 they were published in Leipzig for the first time as a set. This was the first publishing venture under Bach's own direction and they appeared as *Clavier-Übung I*. They are also the last set of keyboard suites he composed following the earlier so-called English and French suites.

The partita has been known by various names such as *partie*, *parthie*, *parthia* and *partia*. In the 16th and 17th centuries it indicated a single-instrumental piece of music which by Bach's time was used to mean a collection of musical pieces and as can be seen from the movements no less than a dance suite. The dance forms used vary in tempo and character and end with a lively gigue. Bach's partitas for keyboard are all popular with performers with this set being considered as the most difficult and rewarding. The partita went out of fashion around the middle of the 18th century.



Ludwig van Beethoven

### LUDWIG van BEETHOVEN:

32 Variations on an original theme in C minor, WoO 80.

This is the 18th set of variations for piano which Beethoven composed. He finished it in 1806 and Beethoven was to write the next set in 1809 and never returned to the genre until his last set, the formidable Diabelli Variations of 1823. A good number of Beethoven's works were not published with an opus number and some only after his death. This is why they are followed with WoO, meaning Werke ohne Opusnummer: Works without Opus number. Was Beethoven being falsely self-deprecating upon hearing them, (whether in his mind or with his impaired and very advanced deafness), he said of WoO80 "That nonsense by me? Oh Beethoven what an ass you were!" For quite a long time before other sets of variations were reevaluated, these variations enjoyed far more popularity with audiences and they have been considered as being a sort of landmark in Beethoven's work. They share a link with that certain powerful progression of the music which heralds his so-called third-period style.

### JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH:

Italian Concerto BWV 971

- i. Allegro
- ii. Andante
- iii. Presto

This is one of Bach's most popular keyboard concertos and has been recorded several times both for harpsichord and piano. Its original title was Concerto nach Italienischen Gusto (Concerto in the Italian taste). It is widely and simply known as the Italian Concerto and was originally published in 1735. Composed for a two-manual harpsichord, Bach followed the Italian concerto grosso style in which contrasting effects of piano and forte are obtained using the manuals of a two-manual harpsichord. That is the original version while of course a transcription for piano seeks to achieve that on a single keyboard. Both the outer movements are in F Major, both are very energetic and lively and in ritornello style. The central contrasting slow movement which they frame is in the relative key of D minor.



## Angela Hewitt

Angela Hewitt occupies a unique position among today's leading pianists. With a wide-ranging repertoire and frequent appearances in recital and with major orchestras throughout Europe, the Americas and Asia, she is also an award-winning recording artist whose performances of Bach have established her as one of the composer's foremost interpreters.

In September of 2016, Hewitt began her "Bach Odyssey", performing the complete keyboard works of Bach in a series of 12 recitals. The whole cycle, which culminates with *The Art of Fugue* in June 2020, is being presented in London's Wigmore Hall, New York's 92 nd Street Y, and in Ottawa, Tokyo and Florence. After her performances of the complete *Well-Tempered Clavier* at the 2019 Edinburgh Festival, the critic of the London Times wrote, "...the freshness of Hewitt's playing made it sound as though no one had played this music before."

Her appearances in 2019/20 include recitals in Vancouver, Amsterdam, Beverley Hills, Atlanta, Oxford, Dortmund, Leipzig and Malta. She will appear as soloist with the Montreal Symphony (also performing Schubert's *Winterreise* with Ian Bostridge), Aurora (London), Toronto Symphony and Helsinki Philharmonic orchestras, and conduct Bach concertos from the piano with the Orchestre Ensemble Kanazawa in Japan. Special events include an evening with author Ian McEwan at Vienna's Konzerthaus.

Recent highlights include her debut at Vienna's Musikverein (playing and conducting Bach concertos with the Tonkünstler-Orchester Niederösterreich), the Cartagena Festival in Colombia, a residency at Harvard University, and Beethoven with the Xi'an Symphony in China.

Hewitt's award-winning cycle for Hyperion Records of all the major keyboard works of Bach has been described as "one of the record glories of our age" (The Sunday Times). Her discography also includes albums of Couperin, Rameau, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann, Liszt, Fauré, Debussy, Chabrier, Ravel, Messiaen and Granados. Her second disc of Scarlatti Sonatas and her penultimate volume of Beethoven Sonatas (including the "Waldstein") were released in October 2017 and May 2019 respectively, both hitting the Billboard charts in the USA. In December 2019 a new recording of Bach's Six Partitas will be released. In 2015 she was inducted into Gramophone Magazine's "Hall of Fame" thanks to her popularity with music lovers around the world.

Born into a musical family, Hewitt began her piano studies aged three, performing in public at four and a year later winning her first scholarship. She studied with Jean-Paul Sévillia at the University of Ottawa and won the 1985 Toronto International Bach Piano Competition which launched her career.

In 2018 Angela received the Governor General's Lifetime Achievement Award, and in 2015 she received the highest honour from her native country – becoming a Companion of the Order of Canada (which is given to only 165 living Canadians at any one time). In 2006 she was awarded an OBE from Queen Elizabeth II. She is a member of the Royal Society of Canada, has seven honorary doctorates, and is a Visiting Fellow of Peterhouse College in Cambridge. Hewitt lives in London but also has homes in Ottawa and Umbria, Italy where fifteen years ago she founded the Trasimeno Music Festival – a week-long annual event which draws an audience from all over the world.

# Credits

## **Chairman**

Norman Hamilton

## **Director Festivals Malta**

Annabelle Stivala

## **Assistant Director**

Frans Agius

## **Artistic Director**

Michelle Castelletti

## **Festival Manager**

Jeanelle Vella

## **Festival Officers**

Monique Sammut  
Mario Cassar

## **Marketing Team**

Alice Azzopardi  
Clayton Saliba  
Terrence Cutajar  
Felix Busuttil

## **Graphics & Web Development**

Clayton Saliba

## **TV Production**

Sebio Aquilina  
Clive Pace  
Chantal Fenech  
Alice Azzopardi  
Jeanelle Vella

## **Content Editor**

Albert G. Storace

## **Compères:**

Albert G. Storace  
Clare Agius

## **Technical Team**

Martin Gauci  
Alexander Kitcher  
Saviour Busuttil  
Patrick Cunningham  
Charles Ellul  
Joseph Ellul  
Colin Ellul  
Alan Mifsud

## **Special Thanks**

All staff at Festivals Malta  
Heritage Malta  
Kor Malta  
Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector  
Mdina Local Council  
Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government  
Palazzo Parisio  
Rabat Local Council  
Teatru Manoel  
Valletta Cultural Agency

## Supported by



## Up Next

 [kultura.mt](https://www.kultura.mt)



**9 nov**  
Stabat Mater Dolorosa

Venue: Ta' Giezu Church, Valletta  
Time: 8:00pm



**9 nov**  
Under a Different Sky

Venue: Archaeology Museum, Valletta  
Time: 9:00pm



**10 nov**  
Congregation at Mdina

Location: Mdina (More info on [festivals.mt](https://www.festivals.mt))  
Time: 10:00am | 12:00pm | 2:00pm | 4:00pm