Mari Kodama

Piano

““Kodama captures that sense of scale in a performance that’s both fiery and thoughtful.””

*BBC Music Magazine, 2023*

Mari Kodama is consistently praised for her virtuosity in a wide range of repertoire, including orchestral, chamber and solo works by composers of all periods. She is also known for her natural musicality, tonal expressiveness with a clear form, and as a benchmark Beethoven interpreter.

In the 2023/24 Season, Mari Kodama showcases her diverse talents with various international concert appearances, such as an open-air concert with Philharmonischen Staatsorchesters Hamburg (Kent Nagano), three season opening concerts with National Symphony Orchestra, Taiwan (Lan Shui), debut concerts with Orchestra Haydn of Bolzano and Trento and a return to Japan Philharmonic (Kahchung Wong). She will give a solo recital for Festival Louvre Lance as well as duo recitals with Momo Kodama in Japan and at Salle Bougie in Montreal. She will also give her first recital at Konzerthaus Blaibach which marks the start of her series with all 32 Beethoven’s piano sonatas and new works written by Rodolphe Bruneau-Boulmier.

As a further demonstration of her versatility, she plays a central part in the hugely successful ballet production ‘Beethoven Projekt II’ (John Neumeier) which re-opened the Staatsoper Hamburg after months of Covid-19 closures and which was revived in 2022/23 with eight performances. In recital, she collaborated with Markus Hinterhäuser featuring Messiaen’s Visions de l’Amen. She also organised the Beethoven Festival ‘A Life in a Day’ in San Francisco, and presented all 32 of Beethoven's piano sonatas over two days by 14 different soloists.

Beethoven’s piano works form a focal point of Mari Kodama’s recording activities with Pentatone and Berlin Classics. She is one of few female pianists to record the composer’s complete sonatas, with her 2014 box set from Pentatone receiving critical acclaim. In fall 2019 she released Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.0-5, which together with his Rondo for Piano and Orchestra and his Eroica Variations for solo piano complement the Beethoven CD - Box with all of Beethoven's piano concertos as well as the Triple Concerto together with Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and Kent Nagano (Berlin Classics). Kodama’s next release will be Mozart’s Concertos for Three Pianos and Poulenc’s Concerto for Two Pianos with Orchestre de la Suisse Romande.

Through her performing activities, Mari Kodama has brought infrequently heard gems of the piano repertoire to global audiences. She has performed Stenhammer's Piano Concerto No.2 in Gothenburg and New York and has also collaborated with Viviane Hagner on Alban Berg’s Chamber Concerto for Piano and Violin, which they performed with both the Jyväskylä Sinfonia and the DSO Berlin. Additionally, in 2013 Mari Kodama premiered Jean-Pascal Beinthus’ Double Piano Concerto together with Momo Kodama and Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte Carlo. Mari Kodama also performed in the Canadian premieres of Jörg Widmann’s Valse Bavaroise and Humoresken, both at the Canadian Orford Festival in summer 2010.

In addition to her performances, Mari Kodama also plays an active role as a music festival artistic director. She co-founded the Forest Hill Musical Days Festival, a chamber music festival in San Francisco, with her husband Kent Nagano, and she has also led the chamber music series at the Orford Music Festival. In 2018 she assumed artistic directorship at the Festival Tra Luce e Sogno in Postignano, Italy, for which she secured artists such as Christian Gerhaher, Matt Haimovitz and Gerold Huber, among others. Mari Kodama is a Steinway Artist.

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