

# MEDIA RELEASE

8 Sept 2023



Internationally acclaimed Australian pianist

**Sarah Grunstein**

**Sydney Opera House, Utzon Room**

**Saturday 25 November at 7.30pm**

**Beethoven's Last Sonatas**

*“penetrating musical intelligence... tempestuous... imbued with a luminous calm”*

***The New York Times***

Internationally acclaimed Australian pianist, Sarah Grunstein, returns to the Sydney Opera House by popular demand, to perform in November 2023. While Grunstein is distinguished for her interpretation of Bach's works, the praise she has received is not limited to her performances of Bach. Grunstein's playing has “evoked memories” of the intimate and poetic performance styles of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century English piano giants, Harold Samuel and Dame Myra Hess.

Her 2023 Sydney Opera House recital is a programme entitled **Beethoven's Last Sonatas**. The programme comprises the final three of Beethoven's thirty-two piano sonatas: his *Sonata in E major*, Op. 109, *Sonata in A-flat major*, Op. 110, and his *Sonata in C minor*, Op. 111.

Grunstein remarks, “In his piano sonatas, Beethoven takes us on a journey. His intent was always to arouse his listeners' emotions. Beethoven's late sonatas are a profound journey into the expressiveness of his late style, his inventiveness with structure and the artist's sound palette, and his demands on the performer and the instrument. The works are at once dramatic and spiritual, harking back to early 18<sup>th</sup> century styles, and looking ahead to poetic Romanticism. Each sonata is distinct, yet the three together become a journey. For the music-lover's soul, this journey is one of transcendence.”

Described by The New York Times for her “penetrating musical intelligence” this concert will be a rare chance to hear one of Australia’s finest international pianists. Of Grunstein’s Beethoven, The New York Times wrote: “Beethoven's Sonata in D was delivered with a directness that only heightened the tragedy that propels the central Largo; the surrounding three movements danced with appropriate grace...”

Many will remember **Sarah Grunstein** as the pianist who, as a young teenager, performed the soundtrack for Bruce Beresford's early Australian film, “*The Getting of Wisdom*.” **Sarah Grunstein** soon after moved to New York, graduating from The Juilliard School (where she was later appointed as a Teaching Fellow), and earned her doctorate at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Her career has included concerts at London’s Southbank Centre, New York’s Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Italy, Austria, Hungary, the U.K., New Zealand, and her homeland. She has gained international acclaim for her performances, described by *The New York Times* as “tempestuous” and “imbued with a luminous calm”.

Grunstein states, “When I perform, it is as if I am bringing to my audience a dear friend, whom I wish for my audience to get to know. In this case I am bringing to my listeners Beethoven in his last piano sonatas – with all their drama, improvisatory aspects, poetic and rhetorical qualities, and transcendent spirit. Beethoven at once alluded to the past yet was breaking ground in the poetic qualities of his instrumental writing, and in his demands of the piano and the pianist. Among my passions is sharing this transcendental journey with my listeners.”

"Introspective and poetic, Sarah Grunstein's performance was profoundly sensitive... Sarah Grunstein really came into her own, playing with a spontaneity and abandon that stemmed from her technical mastery and intimate knowledge ... Sarah Grunstein mesmerised us with some of the most beautiful piano music ever written." -- **Shamista de Soya, SoundsLikeSydney**

"In a city rich in pianists par excellence, Sarah Grunstein is la crème de la crème. Grunstein's masterful rendition of the Goldberg Variations held her audience in a sparkling web of enchantment" -- **Eve Rifkah, The Classical Voice of New England.**

"At Sarah Grunstein's Bach concerts at Carnegie Hall (Weill Recital Hall) in February, the opening notes of the Prelude from the Partita in B-flat evoked memories of Dame Myra Hess and Englishman Harold Samuel, i.e., she cared deeply about the music, knew stylistically what to do with it, and (best of all) produced a demure, pearly, singing tone ... This Australian native ... is an artist worth hearing." -- **Harris Goldsmith, American Record Guide**

This concert presents a rare opportunity to hear one of Australia’s finest international pianists.

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

Facebook: facebook.com/sarahgrunstein4

**Venue** Utzon Room, Sydney Opera House  
**Bookings** 02 9250 7777 or [sydneyoperahouse.com](http://sydneyoperahouse.com)  
**Date / Time** Saturday 25 November at 7.30pm

**BEETHOVEN’S LAST SONATAS:**

Sonata in E major, Op. 109  
Sonata in A-flat major, Op. 110  
Sonata in C minor, Op. 111

**For further media enquiries only:-**

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