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Simone Dinnerstein

The American pianist on her love of Gould's Goldberg recordings and her respect for the masterpiece itself



INFLUENCE: 'I was obsessed with his playing'

'I HEARD GLENN GOULD'S 1981 recording of the *Goldberg Variations* when I was 13 – they made a huge impact on me as I had never heard anything like it before. I even remember where I was when I heard the Aria. Until I was about 30, when I learned the piece myself, I was obsessed with Gould's playing, and I've seen every film of him that it's possible to see.

'His two recordings of it were such great monumental visions of the music that I think anyone was able to listen to it – you didn't need to know anything about music to understand that something unique was taking place. The *Goldbergs* were able to show Gould's personality in all its facets, and in a very strong and clear way – his recordings have a sort of manic obsession with the music about them, but then the music itself has that in it, too. So the perfect combination of music and performer.

'The *Goldberg Variations* are fascinating. I don't think there's any other piece of keyboard music that has that weight and perfection. It's so different from anything else. The one work that is often compared to it is Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations*, but I don't think it holds up to the perfection of the *Goldbergs*, in terms of its shape and its range of expression.

'The *Goldbergs* is a piece I'm going to play through my entire life, and I think that it will probably mean something different to me at different times in my life, too.'

Simon Dinnerstein's recording of the Goldberg Variations is available on Telarc. 'Bach: A Strange Beauty' is on Sony Classical.