Dr. Damjana Bratuž

*Lectio Magistralis – Piano Masterclass*

*Condividere la partitura / Sharing the Score*

Tuesday, November 8, 2016 | 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

**Ballade in G minor, op. 23**

Jany Lu

F. Chopin

**Sonata in A minor D. 784/i**

Liam Pistor

F. Schubert

**Partita No. 3 in A minor, movements i-iii**

Nicole Lavallee

J. S. Bach

The idea behind this masterclass is to follow the example of those held in Paris by French master Alfred Cortot in the summer of 1955, in which Dr. Bratuž was one of the participants. “In order to impress on performers that a real interpreter should be a complete musician capable of assimilating the findings of historical and stylistic analysis,” Cortot required of all pianists who took part in his *Cours d’interprétation* to send him ahead of time three short essays related to the composition they were performing, asking them to provide their own, personal, insights into:

1. the place and the significance of the composer within the musical/historical period in which he lived;
2. the nature and the significance of the work being performed within the composer’s entire oeuvre;
3. their own reading and interpretation of the score.

This assignment enabled Cortot to assess in advance the musical and artistic level of awareness of each participant.

“There is a Cortot legacy, both for performers and for teachers, and it resides not primarily in the particulars of his performing style or his pedagogical advice. These may fade or become dated in time. His most precious legacy lies rather in the spirit of inquiry and of reverence for art, in the profound desire to transcend the notes and touch at the heart of musical truth that permeates his entire life and oeuvre. That spirit can still bear a rich harvest today for those who embrace it.”

Dr. Bratuž’s paper “Cortoshima, the Island of a French Pianist/Scholar” has been accepted for presentation at the IMS (International Musicological Society) Congress in Tokyo, Japan, in March 2017.

*From ‘Cortot teaching and classes’ (Web)*
Biography

Damjana Bratuž visited the University of Victoria during her 1981 Bartók Centenary Tour, at the time she became one of the three musicians in Canada – with Zoltán Székely and Arpad Joó – who were honoured by the Hungarian cultural authorities for her “creative activity which has greatly contributed to the appreciation [connaissance] of Bartók’s oeuvre.”

Professor Emeritus Damjana Bratuž is regarded as a pioneer in multidisciplinary musical research. Her Doctoral degree from Indiana University was in Piano Literature and Performance, with a Minor in Radio and Television.

Already in the late 1960s The Washington Post praised one of her piano recitals as « the kind of program that both enlightens and edifies the listener... academia and imagination were responsible for her unique and revealing listing... ».

As a lecturer, Dr. Bratuž has been known to explore the convergence of the arts and literature to aid the comprehension of the expressive content and of the construction of musical compositions. In her public presentations she began to intertwine images, sound, and text long before the recent technological advances have permitted her a welcome simplification of the process.

A grant from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a period of research in Semiotics at the University of Bologna enabled her to follow Umberto Eco’s seminars, and established Dr. Bratuž’s expertise in the semiotics of performance. At Western University, during the last two years of her tenure, she conducted a course in Musical Semiotics for the Centre of Theory and Criticism.

Since 1996 she has contributed to the International Project of Musical Signification with presentations given in Finland, Bologna, Aix-en-Provence, Paris, Rome and Vilnius. She has continued to participate in other international conferences and papers, and to give seminars, lecture-recitals, and master classes in Europe, North America and New Zealand.

Although the majority of her topics involve the music of Béla Bartók, in recent years the titles of her presentations have included: Luciano Berio: On Sound Becoming Sense; Symbolic Gestures in the Performance of Clementi’s ‘Didone abbandonata’ (University of Toronto); On the Embodiment of Form: Polychronic Movement in Flaubert and Debussy (Aix-en-Provence); The Feminine Side of the Musical Mind (University of Groningen, Holland), and most recently, On the Creation of One’s Own Precursors, for the conference ‘Minimalism Unbounded!’ (Turku and Helsinki).

Dr. Bratuž has been invited repeatedly to Finland for recitals and seminars, including the remarkable series of twelve seminars Musical Performance and the Dialogic Imagination (2000). In 2015, distinguished musicologist Susanna Välimäki, has interviewed her about her life and her teaching for the Finnish National Radio.

In the field of pedagogy, Dr. Bratuž has led and shaped the talent of music students and teachers in opposition to the prevailing training for early display and competition, toward a larger cultural contribution, one in which emergent artists could be supported in their communities by cultivated and well-informed interlocutors. She created special university courses, held summer sessions for teachers at several universities, adjudicated in national and international competitions, sharing her original approach and ideas both with the international academic world and with the general public.

David Stabler, music critic of The Oregonian whose series Lost in the Music of 2003 was shortlisted for the Pulitzer Prize, has published two Tributes to Dr. Bratuž, An die Musik (1993) and Teaching to Our Imaginations, not to Our Limitations (2009). Both are available on www.damjanabratuz.ca.