

**signum**  
CLASSICS

# *Lullabies for Mila*

**Alessio Bax** *piano*



# LULLABIES FOR MILA

1	Nocturne from <i>Lyrical Pieces Book Five, Op. 54</i>	Edvard Grieg	[3.37]
2	Prelude No. 4 in D Major, Op. 23	Sergei Rachmaninov	[4.29]
3	Air from <i>Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D Major, BWV 1068</i>	Johann Sebastian Bach, Arr. A. Siloti	[5.29]
4	Siciliano from <i>Flute Sonata in E-Flat Major, BWV 1031</i>	Johann Sebastian Bach, Arr. A. Siloti	[2.13]
5	Sheep May Safely Graze, BWV 208	Johann Sebastian Bach, Arr. E. Petri	[5.14]
6	Intermezzo in A Major from <i>8 Klavierstücke Op. 76, No. 6</i>	Johannes Brahms	[4.42]
7	Waltz No. 15 in A-Flat Major, Op. 39*	Johannes Brahms	[1.20]
8	Waltz No. 2 in E Major, Op. 39*	Johannes Brahms	[1.07]
9	Vocalise, Op. 34, No. 14	Sergei Rachmaninov	[6.20]
10	Allegretto from <i>Sonata No. 14 in C-Sharp Minor, Op. 27, No. 2 ("Moonlight")</i>	Ludwig van Beethoven	[2.10]
11	Largo from <i>Keyboard Concerto in F Minor, BWV 1056</i>	Johann Sebastian Bach, Trans. A. Bax	[3.38]
12	Intermezzo in A-Flat Major from <i>8 Klavierstücke Op. 76, No. 3</i>	Johannes Brahms	[2.13]
13	Siciliana from <i>Violin Sonata No. 1 in G Minor, BWV 1001</i>	Johann Sebastian Bach, Trans. L. Godowsky	[3.49]
14	Andante from <i>Violin Sonata No. 2 in A Minor, BWV 1003</i>	Johann Sebastian Bach, Trans. A. Siloti	[4.49]
15	Prelude for the left hand, Op. 9, No. 1	Alexander Scriabin	[2.39]
16	Largo from <i>Prelude in G-Flat Major, Op. 23, No. 10</i>	Sergei Rachmaninov	[3.34]
17	Larghetto from <i>Piano Concerto No. 27 in B-Flat major, K. 595†</i>	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	[8.41]
Total timings:			[66.39]

ALESSIO BAX PIANO  
LUCILLE CHUNG PIANO\*  
SOUTHBANK SINFONIA & SIMON OVER CONDUCTOR†

On May 5, 2014, my wife's life and mine were changed forever. Our daughter Mila was born at the Jewish General Hospital in Montreal. While this is an event many can relate to, no one can ever be prepared for the impact, its sheer magnitude, its complexity and, above all, the beauty that such a little creature can generate in a parent's life.

My family has always been part of who I am, of course. Then music, since it first showed up at my door in the form of an electric toy piano, assumed another central role. Then my wife, with whom I am lucky to share all aspects of my musical and extra-musical life, soon became another cornerstone. I honestly thought I had no more centers of gravity available, until Mila came along.

Most parents know the various challenges a newborn presents, and how those challenges somehow grow exponentially with time. Our worries were about how to keep music at the center of our lives, and at the same time dedicate ourselves completely to our daughter, which she surely expected and deserved. Would we resent the time music took away from her, or perhaps be frustrated at not being able to dedicate enough time to

our art? I eventually discovered that those were common fears among parents. To our surprise, we discovered that music works in a very special way. Much has been said about music being the ultimate universal language, but it is also all-encompassing. Yes, it is a profession that requires 200% of oneself, at all times, but in the process, it never leaves anything or anyone behind. We first realized this when we saw the calming, but always engaging effect that music had on our newborn. Very specific pieces of music, in fact, like Mozart's Adagio from the Clarinet Concerto, always seemed to work. And they had to be very specific versions as well. Once, while traveling, I tried a different version, not played on the basset horn, and Mila would just not have it!

So, without planning it, our daughter, our music, and our lives as we had decided to lead them became one entity. The three of us started traveling together from the time she was two months old. Japan was one of our first destinations, and today, at 17 months of age, she has been to 13 countries in North and South America, Europe, and Asia, and 16 states in the USA. Music was a part of her life from before she was born. She was taking naps right after birth next to me learning a thorny score

like Ligeti's Horn Trio. She's happily sat on stage during rehearsals of Bartók's Concerto for Two Pianos and Percussion, and – possibly the hardest of feats – she has traveled with her mother, pianist Lucille Chung, when I was away on tour, and Lucille had concerts of her own.

But after countless nights of little sleep, wondering if we could even make it on stage for a long recital program, the same magic happens, over and over again. All tiredness is gone, our focus is sharper than ever before, and thoughts of Mila do not disappear but become part of what we are as we delve deeper than ever into the music of the great masters. Somehow I feel she has already brought us a new dimension in music and life: one of simplicity, beauty and love.

This album is not only a carefully curated playlist of soothing classics to calm a baby and perhaps make him or her fall asleep quicker. It is also intended as a gift from parents to their children, with the hope that they too will eventually share music with their loved ones, not just to entertain them but also to enrich their lives. It is a gift from me to other parents, so that at the end of what might have been a challenging and difficult day, they might put their feet up and enjoy a seamless stream of great music spanning three centuries. And it is a little gift from me to my daughter that I hope will enable me, one day, to say thank you for everything she has done and will continue to do for us and for this world.

Alessio Bax, October 2015



## ALESSIO BAX

Pianist Alessio Bax creates “a ravishing listening experience” with his lyrical playing, insightful interpretations, and dazzling facility. “His playing quivers with an almost hypnotic intensity”, says *Gramophone*, leading to what *Dallas Morning News* calls “an out-of-body experience.” First Prize-winner at the Leeds and Hamamatsu international piano competitions – and a 2009 Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient – he has appeared as soloist with over 100 orchestras, including the London and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras, the Dallas and Houston Symphonies, the NHK Symphony in Japan, the St. Petersburg Philharmonic with Yuri Temirkanov, and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra with Sir Simon Rattle.

Bax’s celebrated discography for Signum Classics includes Beethoven’s “Hammerklavier” and “Moonlight” Sonatas (a *Gramophone* “Editor’s Choice” and one of the magazine’s “Top Ten recent Beethoven recordings”); *Bax & Chung*, a duo disc with Lucille Chung, presenting Stravinsky’s original four-hand version of the ballet *Pétrouchka* as well as music by Brahms and Piazzolla; *Alessio Bax plays Mozart*, comprising Piano Concertos K. 491 and K. 595



with London's Southbank Sinfonia led by Simon Over; *Alessio Bax plays Brahms* (Gramophone "Critic's Choice" and *Pianist* "Editor's Choice"); *Rachmaninov: Preludes and Melodies* (*American Record Guide* "Critics' Choice 2011"); and *Bach Transcribed*; and for Warner Classics, *Baroque Reflections* (Gramophone "Editor's Choice").

He performed Beethoven's "Hammerklavier" Sonata for maestro Daniel Barenboim in the PBS-TV documentary *Barenboim on Beethoven: Masterclass*, available as a DVD box set on the EMI label. His performances have been broadcast live on the BBC (UK); CBC (Canada); RAI (Italy); RTVE (Spain); NHK (Japan); WDR, NDR, and Bayerischer Rundfunk (Germany); American Public Media's "Performance Today"; WQXR (New York); WGBH (Boston); WETA (Washington, DC); and Sirius-XM satellite radio, among many others.

Hailed by *International Piano* as "a pianist of refreshing depth," Bax's extensive concerto repertoire has led to performances with such esteemed conductors as Vladimir Ashkenazy, Marin Alsop, Sergiu Comissiona, Vernon Handley, Pietari Inkinen, Hannu Lintu, Andrew Litton, Jonathan Nott, Vasily Petrenko, Sir Simon Rattle, Alexander Shelley, Yuri Temirkanov

and Jaap van Zweden. Besides giving concerts at London's Wigmore Hall, L.A.'s Disney Hall, Washington's Kennedy Center, and New York's Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall, he has appeared at international festivals including London's International Piano Series; the Verbier Festival in Switzerland; the Risør Festival in Norway; England's Aldeburgh and Bath festivals; and the Ruhr Klavier-Festival and Beethovenfest Bonn in Germany. He has also appeared many times at such U.S. festivals as Bravo! Vail, Bard Music Festival, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Great Lakes Festival, and Music@Menlo, and has given recitals in major music halls around the world, including in Rome, Milan, Madrid, Mexico City, Paris, London, Tel Aviv, Tokyo, Seoul, Hong Kong, New York, and Washington, DC.

An accomplished chamber musician, Bax has collaborated with Emanuel Ax, Sol Gabetta, Steven Isserlis, Nicholas Phan, Paul Watkins, and Jörg Widmann, among others, besides touring with Joshua Bell in Europe, Asia, and North and South America; Berlin Philharmonic Concertmaster Daishin Kashimoto in Asia; and regularly with Lucille Chung. In 2013, he received the Andrew Wolf Chamber Music Award and Lincoln Center's Martin E.

Segal Award, which recognizes young artists of exceptional accomplishment.

Bax graduated with top honors at the record age of 14 from the conservatory of his hometown in Bari, Italy, where his teacher was Angela Montemurro. He studied in France with François-Joël Thiollier and attended the Chigiana Academy in Siena under Joaquín Achúcarro. In 1994 he moved to Dallas to continue his studies with Achúcarro at SMU's Meadows School of the Arts, where, with Lucille Chung, he is now the Johnson-Prothro Artist-in-Residence. He also serves with Chung as co-artistic director of Dallas's Joaquín Achúcarro Foundation, created to cultivate the legacy of the Basque pianist and to support young pianists' careers.

Alessio Bax's antecedents are Dutch, German, Belgian, and British, and include English composer Sir Arnold Bax. A Steinway artist, and an avid blogger (alessiobax.blogspot.com), tweeter (@alessiobaxpiano), and self-professed food, photography and AAdvantage Miles addict, he lives in New York City with his wife, pianist Lucille Chung, and their young daughter.

Track 1 recorded in the Britten Studio, Snape Maltings, Saxonmudham, UK, January 2015  
Producer – Anna Barry  
Recording Engineer – Mike Hatch  
Recording Assistant & Editor – Chris Kalcov

Tracks 2, 9 & 16 from *Rachmaninov: Preludes & Melodies* (SIGCD264)  
Tracks 3-5, 11, 13-14 from *Bach Transcribed* (SIGCD156)  
Tracks 6 & 12 from *Alessio Bax Plays Brahms* (SIGCD309)  
Tracks 7 & 8 from *Bax & Chung Piano Duo* (SIGCD365)  
Track 10 from *Alessio Bax Plays Beethoven* (SIGCD397)  
Track 15 from *Scriabin & Mussorgsky* (SIGCD426)  
Track 17 from *Alessio Bax Plays Mozart* (SIGCD321)

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**Gramophone**



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