



FAZIL SAY
Pianist and composer

With his extraordinary pianistic ability, Fazil Say has been touching audiences and critics alike for 25 years in a way that has become rare. Concerts with this artist are different concerts; they are more direct, more open, more exciting. In short: they go straight to the heart. This is what the composer Aribert Reimann must have meant when, during a visit to Ankara in 1986, he had the pleasure, more or less by chance, of hearing the then 16-year-old. He immediately asked his companion, the American pianist David Levine, to come to the conservatoire in the Turkish capital, and he did so with the words that have since become commonplace: "You have to listen to him, the boy plays like a devil".

Fazil Say received his first piano lessons from Mithat Fenmen, a pianist who had studied with Alfred Cortot in Paris. Fenmen - perhaps sensing how great the boy's talent was - asked his pupil to first improvise every day on everyday themes before engaging in the necessary piano exercises and studies. It was in this engagement with free creative processes and forms that the origin was laid for the enormous improvisational talent and aesthetic outlook that forms the core of pianist and composer Fazil Say's self-image. As a composer, Fazil Say has been commissioned by the Salzburger Festspiele, the WDR, the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, the Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the Wiener Konzerthaus, the Dresdner Philharmonie, the Fondation Louis Vuitton, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and the BBC, among others. His output includes four symphonies, two oratorios, various solo concertos and numerous piano and chamber music works.

Fazil Say received his fine-tuning as a classical pianist from 1987 onwards with David Levine, first at the Musikhochschule "Robert Schumann" in Düsseldorf, and later in Berlin. In addition, he regularly attended master classes with Menahem Pressler. Moreover, his outstanding technique soon enabled him to master the so-called war horses of world literature with astonishing aplomb, and it was precisely this mixture of subtlety in Haydn, Bach and Mozart, and virtuoso brilliance in the works of Liszt, Mussorgsky or Beethoven that finally led to his victory at the International "Young Concert Artists" Competition in New York in 1994. Fazil Say has subsequently performed with all the renowned American and European orchestras and numerous great conductors, developing a diverse repertoire ranging from compositions by Johann Sebastian Bach to the "classics" Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, as well as Romantic and contemporary music, including his own compositions for piano.

Since then, Fazil Say has given guest performances in countless countries on all five continents; the French newspaper "Le Figaro" called him "a genius". In the process, Fazil Say has also appeared time and again as a chamber musician. With violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja, for example, he has formed a fantastic duo for years; other prominent partners have included Maxim Vengerov, the Minetti Quartett, the Modigliani Quartett, Nicolas Altstaedt and Marianne Crebassa.

From 2005 to 2010 Fazil Say was the exclusive artist of the Konzerthaus Dortmund, in the 2010/11 season he was Artist in Residence at the Konzerthaus Berlin, and at the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival a programme focus was dedicated to him in the summer of 2011. Further residencies and Fazil Say Festivals were held in Paris, Tokyo, Merano, Hamburg, Salzburg and Istanbul. He was resident artist with the hr-Sinfonieorchester Frankfurt in 2012/13, as well as with the Rheingau Musik Festival in 2013, where he was awarded the Rheingau Musik Preis. In the 2013/14 season he performed five concerts as Composer in Residence at the Wiener Konzerthaus and 14 concerts as Artist in Residence at the Bodenseefestival. In the 2015/16 season, the Alte Oper Frankfurt and the Zürcher Kammerorchester invited him as Artist in Residence, during three seasons he was Artist in Residence at the Festival der Nationen in Bad Wörishofen and in 2018/19 Composer in Residence at the Dresdner Philharmonie. Since the 2019/20 season, Fazil Say has been Artistic Partner of the Camerata Salzburg.



In December 2016, Fazıl Say received the International Beethovenpreis for Human Rights, Peace, Freedom, Poverty Alleviation and Inclusion in Bonn. In autumn 2017, he was awarded the Music Prize of the City of Duisburg.

Fazıl Say's recordings of works by Bach, Mozart, Gershwin and Stravinsky on Teldec Classics as well as Mussorgsky, Beethoven and his own works on naïve have been highly praised by record critics and have received several awards, including three ECHO KLASSIK awards. In 2014, his recording of Beethoven works - the Piano Concerto No. 3 with the hr-Sinfonieorchester Frankfurt under Gianandrea Noseda as well as the Sonata op. 111 and the Moonlight Sonata - as well as the album "Say plays Say" with exclusively his own works were released. In autumn 2016, Warner Classics released the recording of all Mozart sonatas, for which Fazıl Say received his fourth ECHO KLASSIK in 2017. Together with Nicolas Altstaedt, he recorded the album "4 Cities" (2017). In autumn 2017, Warner Classics released Frédéric Chopin's Nocturnes and the album "Secrets" with French songs, which he recorded together with Marianne Crebassa and won the Gramophone Classical Music Award in 2018. His 2018 album is dedicated to Debussy and Satie, while his latest release "Troy Sonata - Fazıl Say Plays Say" features his own works. In January 2020, Fazıl Say's recording of all Beethoven piano sonatas was released by Warner Classics and in the 2021/22 season he will record Bach's Goldberg Variations for Warner Classics.