



Robert Levin in Residence

**Robert Levin in Residence: Telling the story in more than one way –
Improvisational state of mind in action**

Presented by the Centre for Creative Performance and Classical Improvisation

Classical Improvisation Masterclass

Robert Levin appears via video link to work with three Guildhall School musicians, who perform from Guildhall School.

J.S. Bach *Allemande, Sarabande and Overture* from Partita for Keyboard No 4 in D major

William Bracken piano

J.S. Bach *Adagio and Fugue* from Violin Sonata No 3 in C major

Sophia Prodanova violin

J.S. Bach *Allemanda, Corrente and Sarabande* from Partita for Keyboard No 6 in E minor

Eran Sulkin piano

Concert-Lecture and Panel Discussion

Robert Levin Concert-Lecture

Recorded from his home studio in the USA, Robert Levin performs a collection of movements from the Baroque and Classical eras, demonstrating different possibilities of performing the same work while remaining faithful to its compositional structure, spirit and content.

Panel Discussion

The performance is followed by a panel discussion between Robert, appearing via video link, and a panel of seven discussants at Guildhall School:

The three students who played in the masterclass earlier in the day: pianists **William Bracken** and **Eran Sulkin**, and violinist **Sophia Prodanova**.

Professor Ronan O’Hora Head of Keyboard Studies and Head of Advanced Performance Studies, Guildhall School

Professor John Sloboda OBE, FBA* Research Professor, Guildhall School

Professor Henrik Jeldtoft Jensen* Professor of Mathematical Physics and Leader of the Centre for Complexity Science, Imperial College London

Professor David Dolan* Head of the Centre for Creative Performance and Classical Improvisation, Guildhall School

*Co-authors of joint *Improvisational State of Mind* research by Guildhall School and Imperial College London.

These performances took place on Thursday 11 March 2021 and were recorded and produced live by Guildhall School’s Recording & Audio Visual department.

Biographies

Robert Levin is an international concert pianist (period and modern pianos), arguably the world's leading authority in classical improvisation, Bach and Mozart scholar, composer, music-thinker and educator. Robert Levin has performed as a soloist and chamber musician all over the world. One of his next major projects is recording all 27 Mozart piano concerti with the Academy of Ancient Music in London. In his junior year studied music with Nadia Boulanger in Paris and later attended Harvard University. After graduating, he was named Head of the Theory Department at the Curtis Institute of Music. In 1993 he became professor of music at his alma mater, Harvard University, where he remains Professor Emeritus. Robert is the International chair of the Centre for Creative Performance & Classical Improvisation at Guildhall School of Music & Drama and Humanitas Visiting Professor of chamber music at Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH), University of Cambridge. He has completed or reconstructed several eighteenth-century unfinished works, especially unfinished compositions by Mozart and J.S. Bach, including Mozart's Requiem in D minor and Great Mass in C minor.

Henrik Jeldtoft Jensen is one of two research collaborators on this panel. He is Professor of Mathematical Physics at Imperial College London and leader of Imperial's Complexity Science Centre. He has applied techniques of complexity analysis to many things, including how musicians and audience interconnect during music making, improvised or otherwise. In the collaboration with David Dolan and John Sloboda he and his team recorded the brain activity of performers and some members of the audience by use of EEG (electroencephalogram). This allowed him to analyse the level of complexity in the individual brains, and the degree of synchrony between different brains. He was able to show that during improvised performance brain patterns were more complex and more synchronised with each other. He is interested in what such synchronisation might tell us about how to avoid anxiety in situations of uncertainty.

John Sloboda (chair) is Research Professor at Guildhall School. Before he came to Guildhall in 2009, he was a staff member of the School of Psychology at Keele for more than 30 years. He is internationally known for his work on the psychology of music and, at Guildhall School, has worked with colleagues and students to understand the different aspects of performer-audience interactions in live performances, including improvised ones. His collaborators have included two of tonight's panellists, Henrik Jeldtoft Jensen and David Dolan.

Ronan O’Hora has performed all over the world, at prestigious festivals such as Salzburg and Gstaad and with many leading orchestras. He has recorded more than thirty CDs for EMI, Virgin Classics, Hyperion and Tring International. He has been Head of Keyboard Studies at Guildhall School since 1999 and Head of Advanced Performance Studies since 2008 and his students include many successful performers and conservatoire faculty members across the world and many prize-winners in international competitions.

David Dolan who is the overall host for Robert Levin in Residence, has devoted a part of his career as a concert pianist, researcher and teacher, to the revival of classical improvisation and its applications in performance. In his worldwide solo and chamber music performances, he returns to the tradition of incorporating extemporisations within appropriate repertoire in embellished repeats, eingangs & cadenzas, as well as improvised preludes, interludes fantasies. David is a professor of classical improvisation and its applications at Guildhall School, where he is the Head of the Centre for Creative Performance and Classical Improvisation. He also teaches at the Yehudi Menuhin School, and gives masterclasses and workshops in major music institutions worldwide. He also led the research project that involved Henrik Jeldtoft Jensen and John Sloboda looking at the comparative effect of improvised and non-improvised performances of the same pieces.

William Bracken is a pianist in his final undergraduate year studying with Ronan O’Hora and Martin Roscoe at Guildhall School, where he recently won the Beethoven Piano Prize. He previously studied with Richard Meyrick on the Pianoman Scholarship Scheme and Jonathan Middleton at Junior RNCM. He has been a prize-winner at the Welsh International Piano Festival and won the Audience Prize at the Musikfest Wasserschloss Gesmold in Germany. William has been a Concordia Artist since 2018.

Bulgarian violinist **Sophia Prodanova** enjoys a diverse career in London, where she has been living since she had the opportunity to study at the Yehudi Menuhin School in 2014. Currently a student at Guildhall School, she is studying modern violin with David Takeno, baroque violin with Pavlo Beznosiuk, and improvisation with David Dolan. In 2019 and 2020 Sophia was part of the Spira Mirabilis project. She is now a New Ensemblist in the award-winning early music ensemble Arcangelo, directed by Jonathan Cohen, with whom future engagements include appearances at Wigmore Hall and CD recordings for Alpha Classics, among others.

Eran Sulkin is an Israeli pianist currently studying as a postgraduate at Guildhall School with Ronan O’Hora. He is taking an active part in the Interpretation through Improvisation course led by David Dolan. Eran is also studying fortepiano with Maggie Cole, continuo on the harpsichord with James Johnstone, as well as being an active chamber musician.