



Photo: Kathryn Costello

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## ANNE H. GOLDBERG-BALDWIN INTERPRETS BESPOKE 21ST-CENTURY COMPOSITIONS ON 'PERMUTATIONS'

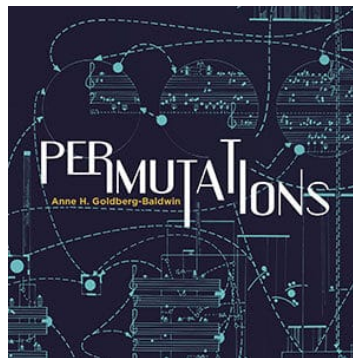
Composer Anne H. Goldberg-Baldwin tackles 15 contemporary pieces for solo piano on her deeply felt and surprisingly varied album, *Permutations*.

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**A**ne H. Goldberg-Baldwin is an artist whose work covers vast territory. As co-founder and artistic director of the Tempus Continuum Ensemble, she has overseen a variety of premiere performances of works by emerging and living performers, and in that same capacity with the Synthesis Aesthetics Project, her talents as a producer, composer, choreographer, and director of full-scale productions have resulted in interdisciplinary art of the highest artistic caliber. In addition to her current status as Assistant Professor of Composition at Berklee College in Boston, it would seem that an album of solo piano music may be but



**PERMUTATIONS**

**ANNE H. GOLDBERG-BALDWIN**

Ravello Records

a mere blip in her resume. But *Permutations* is far from a minor diversion; instead, it's a stunning masterwork of an artistic statement.

Like most of Goldberg-Baldwin's work across multiple disciplines, *Permutations* sees the artist eschewing boundaries and expected norms by attacking the work of several contemporary composers with roughly an hour of dynamic, expertly executed solo piano. Not only does the album continue her long-standing tradition of promoting and premiering music by living composers, but *Permutations* goes a step further by consisting primarily of works composed by "dear friends of the composer who explore different facets of the human experience", according to the album's press materials. With the exception of "Five Meditations on Music from Luigi Rossi's Collection", five pieces composed by German composer and educator Reiko Fütting, all the pieces here are premiere recordings written between 2019 and 2022.

*Permutations* begins audaciously with the 15-minute "Cold Hands", by Icelandic composer Halldór Smárason. The composition incorporates rumbling dissonance, light melodic touches, maddening repetition, and moments of near-silence with the remnants of sustaining notes from earlier passages. Goldberg-Baldwin relishes Smárason's work with a lively, engaging performance that carries the listener through a litany of emotions. By the same token, Kevin Baldwin's "Broken Language" seems to contain a lot of the same emotional pull of the previous composition, albeit on a smaller scale. Abrupt notes, like exclamation points, dot the piece and act as markers between the more melodic, neo-romantic passages.



For her composition, "time leaves traces not etched in stone", Goldberg-Baldwin revels in an adventurous, tactile, somewhat playful style, as the piano is occasionally treated like a percussion instrument. Bits of clacking and tapping offer more sonic variety alongside more traditional chords and jittery notes. The unusual, sparse atmosphere of the piece is unique but also positively creepy (in the best possible way).

Alex Burtzos' "Perforations" gives *Permutations* some of its most accessible, traditionally tonal moments, as the rhythmic chord clusters are followed by more flowery, sustained passages. Goldberg-Baldwin's execution of this utterly captivating composition speaks volumes about her ability to work within various modern compositional styles.

## FEATURED



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