

The NAXOS logo is located in the top left corner. It consists of the word "NAXOS" in a white, bold, sans-serif font, centered within a blue square. Above the text are three stylized white icons of classical columns.

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A portrait of pianist Boris Giltburg is the central focus of the image. He is a young man with short brown hair and light-colored eyes, wearing a dark blue button-down shirt. He is seated at a wooden piano, with his hands clasped together on the fallboard. The background is a soft, out-of-focus teal color.

BEETHOVEN

Für Elise

Boris Giltburg, Piano

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Bagatelle, WoO 59 ‘Für Elise’

The *Bagatelle in A minor, WoO 59* – perhaps the most famous piece in piano literature and universally known by its nickname, *Für Elise* – has a surprising and mysterious history. First sketched in 1808 and completed in 1810, it remained unknown to the world until its (re-)discovery in 1865 by the German music scholar Ludwig Nohl and its publication in 1867, 40 years after Beethoven’s death.

Nohl had found the composition in Munich among the papers of one Babette Bredl, who said the manuscript had come to her from Beethoven’s friend, Therese von Droßdik, née Malfatti. Therese was a pupil of Beethoven, with whom he fell in love and to whom he proposed – and was rejected – in 1810. Bredl had acquired the manuscript through her illegitimate son, the pianist Joseph Rudolph Schachner, who had befriended Therese in Vienna and inherited all her musical affairs in 1851. After Bredl’s death in 1880 the manuscript disappeared again – possibly returning to her son, whose musical estate has not been located – and it remains lost to this day.

This convoluted provenance creates a further mystery: if Beethoven wrote the *Bagatelle* for Therese Malfatti, why does the dedication on the page read ‘For Elise on 27 April in remembrance of L. v. Bthvn’? As there was no ‘Elise’ in Beethoven’s immediate circle, numerous theories have been put forth by musicologists. Their full discussion goes beyond the scope of this note, but to this day not one has been proven beyond doubt.

The music is all artless simplicity, a gentle flow of semi- and demi-semiquavers, touching and sincere.

Boris Giltburg

Boris Giltburg



Photo: Oliver Binns

Pianist Boris Giltburg is lauded across the globe as a deeply sensitive, insightful and compelling musician. Born in 1984 in Moscow, he moved to Tel Aviv at an early age, studying with his mother and then with Arie Vardi. He went on to win numerous awards, notably the First (and Audience) Prize at the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels in 2013. Giltburg has appeared with leading orchestras worldwide such as the Philharmonia, London Philharmonic, Israel Philharmonic, Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, NHK Symphony, WDR Cologne, Oslo Philharmonic, Czech Philharmonic, St Petersburg Philharmonic, and Baltimore and Seattle symphonies. He made his Australian debut in 2017 and has frequently toured China and South America. Since his BBC Proms debut in 2010 he has appeared at many of the major festivals, and has played recitals at Carnegie Hall, Concertgebouw

Amsterdam, Southbank Centre and Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, to name a few. In 2021 he began performing the complete solo works of Ravel at Wigmore Hall and Bozar/Flagey in Brussels. In 2020 he undertook to learn and record on audio and audiovisual all 32 Beethoven sonatas, coinciding with the first volume of the complete Beethoven piano concertos, recorded with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Vasily Petrenko, with whom he previously recorded both Shostakovich concertos, winning a Diapason d'Or. This recording also featured his own arrangement of Shostakovich's *String Quartet No. 8* for solo piano. The first volume in his complete Rachmaninov concerto recordings series, coupled with the *Études-Tableaux* and subsequently the *Corelli Variations* and performed with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Carlos Miguel Prieto, won the award for Best Solo Recording at the inaugural Opus Klassik Awards. His recital discs of Rachmaninov, Liszt and Schumann have been similarly well received. Boris is an avid amateur photographer and blogger, writing about classical music for a non-specialist audience. www.borisingiltburg.com

Für Elise is perhaps the most famous piece in piano literature. Completed in 1810, the piece remained unknown until it was discovered in 1865 by a German music scholar among the papers of Therese von Droßdik, née Malfatti, a pupil of Beethoven with whom he fell in love and to whom he proposed – and was rejected. The music is all artless simplicity, a gentle flow of semi- and demi-semiquavers, touching and sincere. This digital single complements Boris Giltburg’s album of *Piano Concerto No. 5 ‘Emperor’* with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Vasily Petrenko, and the original piano reduction of the *Piano Concerto No. 0, WoO 4* (8.574153).

Ludwig van
BEETHOVEN
(1770–1827)

1 **Bagatelle in A minor, WoO 59**
‘Für Elise’ (1808/10)

3:09

Boris Giltburg, Piano

Recorded: 14 November 2020 at Fazioli Concert Hall, Sacile, Italy

Producer and engineer: Stewart French

Post-production producer: Andrew Keener

Editor: Stephen Frost

Booklet notes: Boris Giltburg

Publisher: G. Henle Verlag

Piano: Fazioli model F278 ‘Mago Merlino’

Cover photo: Sasha Gusov

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