

Animato

**Marialy Pacheco &
Württembergisches Kammerorchester Heilbronn
conductor Gordon Hamilton
J.S. BACH CONCERTO No 7 In G MINOR**

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"I love how Bach creates a complete and expansive work from just a few notes and a small motif," says Cuban pianist and composer Marialy Pacheco, her admiration for the Baroque master evident. "His melodies and harmonies are so simple yet imbued with incredible depth. It's so perfectly composed that every time I play his G minor piano concerto, I'm moved to tears."

Despite her emotional connection to Bach's music, Pacheco, a passionate yet reflective artist of the black-and-white keys, is far from melancholic—especially on stage. There, her instrumental energy and love for high heels merge into what feels like a percussive fiesta. In 2012, she became the first woman to win the solo piano competition at the Montreux Jazz Festival, solidifying her status as an official Bösendorfer Artist. Today, she performs in jazz clubs, international festivals, and prestigious concert halls, collaborating with artists like Max Mutzke and Thomas Quasthoff. In these performances, she masterfully blends Afro-Cuban rhythms with a mix of fiery and contemplative jazz improvisations.

Her classical roots, however, remain foundational, allowing her to seamlessly return to lyrical realms where Caribbean ballad poetry intertwines with Debussy's Impressionist elegance. Trained as a classical pianist in Havana, her rigorous education sharpened not only her ear but also her touch, enabling an exceptional subtlety of expression rare among jazz pianists.

"Her phrasing is simply fantastic, and her playing is incredibly fast yet impeccably clean," says conductor Gordon Hamilton, who collaborated with Pacheco and the Württemberg Chamber Orchestra Heilbronn on the recording of Bach's G minor concerto. "It's fascinating how clearly every individual voice emerges in her performance and how she finds the perfect touch to ensure no note sounds alike. She brings an arresting intensity to even the smallest moments of delay at just the right time." Or, as Pacheco herself puts it: "It should be groovy, because this music has its own inner pulse and heartbeat." For her, the sixteenth notes in the concerto's first movement shouldn't sound like "machine-gun fire" (as Hamilton describes it), but instead require a light, swinging ease—quintessentially Cuban.

Yet Pacheco refrains from adding exaggerated emotion or jazz-style improvisation to her interpretation. Her reverence and love for Bach are too profound for such liberties. "This music is so perfect; it doesn't need improvisation," she insists. Instead, authenticity and sensitivity take center stage as her hammers strike the strings. In the back of her mind is the legendary Glenn Gould, whose clarity and structural precision in Bach's works remain her ideal. "I wanted to play like him—pure Bach, just the notes and the music they create."

This approach also honors her late father, who passed away in 2023. A singer and longtime artistic director of the Havana Opera, he remains a guiding influence for Pacheco, who has dedicated her Bach album to him. "As a child, I practiced three hours a day while he sat beside the piano in an armchair, listening and giving me feedback," she recalls. "And when fuel shortages hit Cuba in the 1990s, he would bike me an hour and a half to the conservatory every morning." Above all, he imparted a lasting lesson: "Music begins where technique ends."

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This philosophy shines in her recording of the G minor concerto. "Marialy didn't try to impose her own musical stamp on the piece but stayed as close as possible to Bach's intentions," Hamilton notes. "Yet thanks to her exquisite phrasing, the dance-like qualities of Bach's music are brought to life with a rare vibrancy." Indeed, an artist's personal touch can emerge not in defiance of fidelity, but through it.

This philosophy shines through in the recording of the G minor concerto. "Marialy didn't try to impose her musical stamp on the piece but stayed as close as possible to Bach's intentions," Hamilton summarizes this extraordinary project. "Yet thanks to her wonderful phrasing, the dance-like qualities of Bach's music suddenly come alive here in a way rarely captured in a recording of this concerto." A distinctive voice, it seems, can emerge even from profound fidelity to the work.

More information: <https://marialypacheco.de>

TRACKS

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|---|------|
| 1. Concerto No.7 in G minor, BWV 1058 - I Allegro | 3:51 |
| 2. Concerto No.7 in G minor, BWV 1058 - II Andante | 7:00 |
| 3. Concerto No.7 in G minor, BWV 1058 - III Allegro assai | 3:48 |

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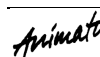
Marialy Pacheco *piano*

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