

Classics meet Jazz: Jazz influences in classical piano repertoire from mid-twentieth century to nowadays

With the birth of Jazz, many classical musicians such as Stravinsky, Debussy, or Kapustin, were captivated by this new style of music. This enthusiasm was reflected in their piano works. For instance, Debussy was clearly highly enthusiastic about ragtime's compositional potential, as demonstrated by his innovative pieces that draw on the genre. In the final movement of the *Children's Corner* suite, 'Golliwogg's Cake-Walk,' he reflected the aesthetic and musical characteristics of American cake-walk and ragtime.

In my research, I aimed to explore Jazz idioms in classical piano repertoire belonging to the period from the mid-twentieth century to nowadays, to achieve a high-quality interpretation combining knowledge about different styles of Jazz with the technique and expressiveness of a classical musician. Furthermore, the purpose of this research was to identify effective strategies to convey Jazz mood. The key question was: ***How can I transfer the essence of Jazz to classical piano repertoire with Jazz idioms?*** Specifically, I examined the effect of adding a rhythmic base to the pieces in my performance. The pieces selected for this research refer to the substyles of Jazz: Latin, cabaret music, funky, and avant-garde music.

The whole project was an Artistic Practice-based Research study. The major focus of research was to advance knowledge about the practice or advance knowledge within the practice. During this study, I used a Practitioner Action Research Methodology. The experiments with Jazz musicians, the most vital part of the research, represented the practical part of this inquiry, where, from the musical analysis of each work and my own practice, I developed different versions of the pieces as I internalized the Jazz idioms. This musical exchange allowed me to understand, integrate, and develop the appropriate style of the pieces I had been working on and to apply this to my solo performances.

By combining videos of my work with Jazz musicians and my solo performance, I will demonstrate to the audience which elements of the music, such as timing, phrasing, or body language, were modified and enriched after the research process (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ls5eCTUnk>). For instance, during the rehearsals and after analyzing the recordings, I realized the phrasing had been affected by adding a rhythmic base due to the rhythmic stability of the bass player, drummer, and percussionists. In order to achieve a balance between the flexibility of the tempo without losing the intrinsic pulse of the music, the collaboration of the musicians was indispensable. I was expected to play the rhythms with a high level of rhythmic sophistication and sensitivity, but being able to play the music in a subtly relaxed manner, breathing when the music needs it.

Suggested program:

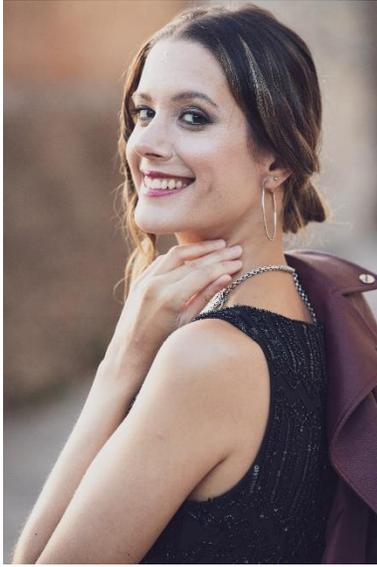
3 last pieces of *Eine Kleine Mitternachtmusik*. George Crumb (8')

- Blues in the Night
- Cadenza with Tolling Bells
- Midnight Transformation

3 Afro-Cuban dances. Ernesto Lecuona (9')

- La Danza de los Nãñigos
- La Conga de Medianoche

Concert étude n° 3 Op. 40 *Toccatina*. Nikolai Kapustin (3')



Beatriz Juana Galán Méndez
Prins Claus Conservatorium, Groningen, The Netherlands
bgm.piano@gmail.com

Beatriz Galán (1990) started her classical piano studies at the Professional Conservatory of Palma de Mallorca, graduating with an Honor Award for Chamber Music. She studied for a Bachelor's Degree specializing in contemporary music in *Musikene*, the High School of Music of the Basque Country. Recently, Beatriz completed her Master of Music Cum Laude at the Prins Claus Conservatorium in Groningen, The Netherlands.

As a classical pianist, Beatriz won several prizes in piano competitions such as 1st International Piano Competition “Vila de Capdepera” and at the 7th International Piano Competition “Ciutat de Mallorca”. She has participated in masterclasses with distinguished pianists: Andrzej Jasinski, Leonid Sintsev, David Kuyken, among others. Nevertheless, she grew up hearing a lot of *Jazz* music.

For years, she had in mind the idea of merging these two genres that accompanied her throughout her life, by researching classical piano repertoire with Jazz influences. Her purpose is to spread this relatively unknown repertoire, and give classical pianists tools to transfer the essence of Jazz style into classical piano repertoire with Jazz influences.