

# cosmophony

Rachel Kiyo Iwaasa, piano

*"A fascinating adventure about unimaginable largeness and gravity, unknowable states, an invitation to wonder."* - Lloyd Dykk, Vancouver Sun

## **Twelve composers share their inner reflections on outer space in *Cosmophony*, Rachel Kiyo Iwaasa's solo piano project inspired by the beauty and mystery of the cosmos.**

Praised in the Vancouver Sun as **"brilliant"** and **"unforgettable,"** the program opens with Denis Gougeon's fiercely virtuosic invocation of the sun, *Piano-Soleil*. From there, audiences are taken on a journey past each of the planets in our solar system from Mercury to Neptune, with pieces written especially for Iwaasa by stellar Canadian composers Rodney Sharman, Marci Rabe, Alexander Pechenyuk, Jocelyn Morlock, Chris Kovarik, Jeffrey Ryan, Stefan Udell, and Jennifer Butler.

Jordan Nobles' *Fragments*, a cluster of brilliant miniatures depicting the Asteroid Belt, nestles between Mars and Jupiter. Pluto, now demoted to dwarf planet status, is replaced by Gliese 581c, a distant planet discovered in 2007 and speculated to be able to support Earth-like life. Composer Emily Doolittle's sparkling depiction expresses a tremulous dream of interstellar travel, alongside our fears of environmental collapse.

For the second half of the programme, George Crumb's monumental *Makrokosmos II: 12 fantasy pieces after the Zodiac* carries us past our galaxy and out into the stars. Written in 1973, this rarely performed twentieth century classic pioneered many revolutionary techniques for the piano. With the pianist often playing directly on the strings, the pieces coax an astonishing variety of unearthly sounds from the instrument.

Iwaasa premiered *Cosmophony* in Vancouver, Canada, in the darkened planetarium of the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre. Lit only by the projections of stunning images of the solar system and beyond, *Cosmophony* created a breathtaking multi-media spectacle. These visuals, together with spectacular new astrophotography collected for the 2009 UNESCO International Year of Astronomy, are available with the concert. *Cosmophony* was released on CD by Redshift Records in June 2010.

### **About Rachel Kiyo Iwaasa**

Hailed in the press as a **"keyboard virtuoso"** (Georgia Straight) and for her ability to take a piece **"from notes on a page to a stunning work of art"** (Victoria Times Colonist), pianist Rachel Kiyo Iwaasa has performed as soloist and chamber musician in Canada, the United States and Germany. Known for bold and innovative concerts, Rachel combines her warmth and curiosity to touch the hearts and minds of audiences, whether she is playing Beethoven and Schumann or Ligeti and Saariaho. Meet Rachel online at [www.iwaasa.com](http://www.iwaasa.com).

### **Available variations of the *Cosmophony* Programme**

**Full Programme:** 1 hour, 40 min (includes 20 min intermission)

**Short Programme:** 45 min (new planets pieces only, no intermission)

Both variations of the *Cosmophony* programme can either be accompanied by visuals, or by an engaging dialogue during which Iwaasa discusses everything from the composer's inspiration to her personal reflections on the music. (Dialogue adds approximately 15 minutes on to the times listed above.)

### **Technical Requirements**

Grand Piano (Yamaha C7 or Steinway D preferred)

*Optional: Video projection system;*

*PA with single mic on piano (for larger venues, Crumb only)*



Photo: Shaira Holman

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**More information: [www.cosmophony.com](http://www.cosmophony.com)**



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