



Composer Nils Vigeland Releases New Album, *Perfect Happiness*

Featuring Vigeland's Piano Music Performed by Jing Yang, Coinciding with the Composer's 75th Birthday in 2025

Out March 28, 2025 on New Focus Recordings
Physical Copies Available Upon Request

"...thoughtful, detailed, intricate, carefully poised music."
– *Chamber Music Magazine*

www.nilsvigeland.com

New York, NY (January 16, 2025) – Composer, pianist, and pedagogue [Nils Vigeland](http://www.nilsvigeland.com) releases a portrait album of his piano works, [Perfect Happiness](http://www.nilsvigeland.com), performed by Chinese-born pianist and Steinway Artist **Jing Yang** on **March 28, 2025** on **New Focus Recordings**. Vigeland's composition career launched with the premiere of his first orchestral piece with the **Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Lukas Foss** in 1970. Vigeland taught for 30 years at the **Manhattan School of Music**, retiring as Chair of the Composition Department in 2013. Vigeland, who turns 75 on January 29, 2025, has premiered more than 30 works by composers including **Linda Bouchard**, **John Cage**, **Roscoe Mitchell**, **Chris Newman**, **Phil Niblock**, **Pauline Oliveros**, **Leo Smit**, and **Christian Wolff**.

The music in *Perfect Happiness*, Vigeland says, "is a document of a lifetime spent playing and composing on an acoustic instrument, an instrument that continues to exercise a fascination in its possibilities. It is through the piano, the playing of it as well as its repertoire, that music became essential for me." *Perfect Happiness* is meant to be a document of a lifetime spent playing and composing on an acoustic instrument, an instrument with many possibilities. "It is through the piano, the playing of it as well as its repertoire, that music became essential for me."

The four works on *Perfect Happiness* span a period of 29 years. **The Piano Sonata**, the first movement which was written in 1979, took nearly three decades to arrive at its final form with the addition of the last two movements written in 2008. Its form is classical, not only in the tempo relationships of the three movements but also within the movements.

In **9 Waltzes and an Ecosaise (1987)**, historical allusions are clearly evident, modeled after the dance collections of Schubert. Vigeland shares, "Two of them, the second and fourth, are actual paraphrases of Schubert waltzes. While it might be possible to dance to a few of them, there is considerable disruption of triple meter as well as of the symmetry of time units necessary for group dancing."

Mnemosyne (1987) was written for Vigeland's graduate school piano teacher and frequent collaborator Yvar Mikhashoff. Vigeland thinks "of this piece as a portrait of him, of what I considered his dual nature. The quiet, static opening suggests the solitariness of his peripatetic travels, while the continuation reflects his public persona, ebullient and extroverted."

Perfect Happiness (2000) was dedicated to Vigeland's mother on her 81st birthday. Vigeland says, "After I gave its first performance, a group of Manhattan School of Music students asked me what the title meant, the implication being that it contradicted their impression of the music. My reply was that happiness has many forms and sources. Their sequence in the piece is elation, tranquility, ecstasy and willfulness."

Vigeland adds, "I would like to thank Jing Yang for her extraordinary performance of these pieces. It is a composer's greatest satisfaction to hear one's music so fully understood and realized."



Perfect Happiness Tracklist

Nils Vigeland (b. 1950) – Piano Sonata (1979/2009)

1. I.– [12:11]

2. II. – III. (attacca) [11:19]

Vigeland – 9 Waltzes and Ecossaise (1987)

3. I. Vivace – II. Zart (attacca) [01:56]

4. III. Giocoso – [00:45]

5. IV. Inutile [00:46]

6. V. Appassionata [01:17]

7. VI. Sardónico [00:38]

8. VII. Capricciosa [00:59]

9. VIII. Ostinato [01:36]

10. IX. Mesto [01:09]

- 11. Ecossaise [01:28]
- 12. Vigeland – *Mnemosyne* (1987) [05:00]
- Vigeland – *Perfect Happiness* (2000)
- 13. I. [01:26]
- 14. II. [01:46]
- 15. III.-IV. (attacca) [06:49]

Total Time: 00:49:09

Jing Yang, piano

Recorded April 22 & June 29, 2024 at Oktaven Studios, Mount Vernon, NY

Produced by Nils Vigeland

Editing, Mixing and Mastering: Ryan Streber

Post-Production Advisor: Daniel Lippel

Created with: HOFA CD-Burn.DDP.Master (App) V2.5.8

FCR435

About Nils Vigeland

Nils Vigeland was born in Buffalo, NY in 1950, the son of musicians. He made his professional debut as a pianist in 1969 with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra led by conductor Lukas Foss. He later studied composition with Foss at Harvard College, graduating with a B.A. in 1972. He earned his Ph.D at The University at Buffalo where he studied composition with Morton Feldman and piano with Yvar Mikhashoff. With these mentors he was fortunate in developing long personal and professional associations.

His first orchestral piece was conducted by Foss with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra in 1970 and Foss gave the first performance of *One, Three, Five* with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra in 1983. Mikhashoff was instrumental in the commission and performance of many pieces, including the Piano Concerto (1984), premiered by Mikhashoff and the Oslo Radio Orchestra, *In Black and White* for piano and chamber orchestra, and *False Love/True Love* (1992), premiered by the English National Opera at the Almeida Theater, London.

With flutist Eberhard Blum and percussionist Jan Williams, Vigeland toured for eight years with Feldman as “Morton Feldman and Soloists,” performing the extended length works for flute, percussion, and piano that Feldman composed for them. They recorded these pieces on hat ART. More recent collaborations include CDs with Jenny Q Chai (Naxos), Daniel Lippel and John Popham (New Focus), and Delia Shand (Apple Music). Most recently his 90-minute solo piano work, *Pale Fire*, an “opera without words” based on the poem of the same name by Vladimir Nabokov, was given its first performance in November 2023.

Foreight years (1980-88) Vigeland directed The Bowery Ensemble, which gave an annual series of concerts in Cooper Union, NYC. The ensemble was strongly associated with the music of the New York School and gave the first performance of over 30 works by composers including Linda Bouchard, John Cage, Roscoe Mitchell, Chris Newman, Phil Niblock, Pauline Oliveros, Leo Smit, and Christian Wolff.

Mr. Vigeland taught for 30 years at Manhattan School of Music, retiring as Chair of the Composition Department in 2013. His own work appears on CDs from Mode, EMF, New Focus Recordings, Lovely Music, and Naxos. His choral music is published by Boosey and Hawkes and Hal Leonard. A dual-language (Chinese/English) book, *Symmetry and Proportion; Studies in Musical Form*, was published by the Central Conservatory, Beijing in 2022. Scores, recordings, and writings are available on nilsvigeland.com.

About Jing Yang

Chinese-born pianist **Jing Yang** has been recognized as a soloist, chamber musician and ensemble player by audiences worldwide. She has given solo recitals in China, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Spain, Taiwan and the United States. In her native country, her recital tours have brought her to Beijing, Hangzhou, Shanghai, and Shenyang. She has appeared as a soloist with the Saint Petersburg Philharmonic Symphony in Japan, and DePaul Symphony Orchestra in Chicago. In 2014, Ms. Yang appeared as the soloist for the Opening Ceremony of Youth Olympic Games in Nanjing, representing the Americas.

As a chamber musician she has performed extensively in venues including Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center. She is a frequent advocate of new music, working collaboratively with composers and new music ensembles from China, Germany, Israel, Japan, Mexico, and the United States. She has recorded the music of Reiko Fūting on New Focus (FCR405). A participant in multiple international piano competitions, Ms. Yang won first prize at the Munz Scholarship Competition in New York, second prize at the Eastman International Piano Competition, and third prize in both the Beijing Piano Competition for Young Artists, and the Chopin International Piano Competition in Taipei. She won the special prize in the St. Petersburg International Piano Competition.

Ms. Yang holds a bachelor's degree and a doctoral degree of musical arts from Manhattan School of Music as well as a master's degree from The Juilliard School. Ms. Yang currently teaches at Extension Division of Mason Gross School at Rutgers University, and Manhattan School of Music Distance Learning Program. She became staff pianist and chamber coach for the Pinchas Zukerman Performance Program at Manhattan School of Music in 2017 and has served as piano faculty and chamber music faculty for the Young Artist Program at National Arts Center in Ottawa, Canada. She has been a Steinway Artist since 2010. Learn more at www.morningpiano.wixsite.com.

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