



From left: Khatia Buniatishvili wears a Cartier high jewellery ring in platinum with a sapphire, emeralds and diamonds, and a Panthère de Cartier bracelet in white gold with onyx, emeralds, chrysoprases, aquamarines and diamonds

| One to Know |

The Gift of Time

As a doyenne of a music genre that bridges the past and the present, classical pianist Khatia Buniatishvili shares her take on creating timeless art and embracing her roots *By Ho Yun Kuan*



With her red lipstick, tousled curls and evening gown, Khatia Buniatishvili is always a vision on stage. But more than that, she is a virtuoso on the piano. A celebrated musician, she has performed at some of the world's most prestigious locations, garnering applause and critical acclaim for her bold interpretation of classical masterpieces.

She has been lauded as a breath of fresh air in the classical music scene; a much-needed injection of young talent into a genre that is struggling to attract

new audiences. It wasn't only classical music fans who sat up and took notice. The executives at Cartier did too and named her an ambassador of the maison last year.

"I accepted with great joy," Buniatishvili says of the appointment. She is of the opinion that jewellery and music making have more in common than one may think. "They have both existed since humankind started creating art. Not everything survives through time, but the worthwhile ones do—that's why we still listen to Bach

and Mozart. Art may be subjective, but time defines its objective qualities."

Like her taste in music, her favourite designs from the maison are those with a little age on them—the Babylone necklace from 1990, and a pair of ear clips from 1936 designed for and worn by Clementine Spencer-Churchill, Winston Churchill's wife. "Just as there are pieces of classical music that sound as powerful today as they did centuries ago, they still touch people's hearts. Timelessness is priceless," she says.

Those who have seen Buniatishvili on stage often describe her as passionate; little wonder, given her beginnings. Growing up in a post-Soviet Georgia in the 1990s, she didn't have a carefree childhood. "The worlds of glamour and luxury," she shares, "were so far from our reality at the time, living in freezing houses with no electricity in winter."

She found comfort in music, taking up the piano under the tutelage of her mother at the age of three. At just six, she gave her first public performance as a soloist in a concert with the Tbilisi Chamber Orchestra. She continued to hone her craft at the Tbilisi State Conservatory, and the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna before making her professional debut at

New York's Carnegie Hall in 2008. Music was her ticket not merely out of poverty, but also into the very echelons of society that had seemed so out of reach when she was a child.

The Buniatishvili of today may live a life of glamour, but she has never forgotten her humble roots. "For centuries, luxury has been a part of inequality. Therefore, it is very important to me that in modern times, luxury brands show awareness of social issues. We can defeat inequality not by being in conflict, but by finding long-term solutions and balance," she states. Cartier, with its many philanthropy projects, including its support of the United Nation's World Food Programme and its donations to Covid-19 relief efforts, fulfils this criterion for Buniatishvili.

"Growing up in Georgia in total chaos and financial difficulty, I'll always be sensitive to issues of inequality, no matter how successful I am," she continues passionately, sharing her wish that a minimum standard of living will one day be provided for all. "Everyone deserves to have their rights protected. I need to help, and I want to help as long as extreme inequalities exist. With intelligence, generosity and a strong will, I believe that everything is doable."