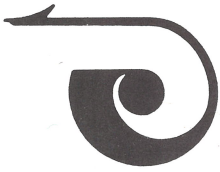


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Vancouver Recital Society
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presents

EMANUEL AX, piano
YO-YO MA, cello
Joint Recital

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Sonata in G minor, Op.5 No.2

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

Sonata in C Major, Op.65

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SERGEI RACHMANINOV

Sonata in G minor, Op.19

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Meet the Artists...



EMANUEL AX

Hailed as one of the most remarkable pianists of his generation, Emanuel Ax has won some of the most prestigious prizes in the music world, performed with virtually every major orchestra in the United States, as well as those of Eastern and Western Europe, Latin America and the Orient, given countless recitals, and recorded numerous albums for RCA. The Polish-born Emanuel Ax catapulted into public view in 1974 when he won the First Artur Schnabel International Piano Competition held in Tel Aviv. Five years later he captured the coveted Avery Fisher Prize.

Mr. Ax is an exclusive RCA recording artist and many of his albums have become best sellers. His Chopin Concerti and Schumann's Humoreske and Fantasiestücke have received nominations for Grammy Awards. This past year, the Brahms D minor Concerto with the Chicago Symphony under James Levine, and the Brahms Quintet with the Cleveland Quartet brought Mr. Ax two more Grammy nominations. Last month Emanuel Ax with Yo-Yo Ma won the Grammy Award for the Best Chamber Music Performance for their recording of the Brahms Sonatas for Cello and Piano. Currently he and Mr. Ma are recording all the Beethoven Sonatas for CBS Records. Two volumes

have already been released. Mr. Ax is also recording all the Beethoven Concerti with Andre Previn and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

Highlighting the 1984/85 season were appearances with the New York Philharmonic, Detroit Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony and National Symphony. In addition, he performed with Yo-Yo Ma in duo recitals in New York City at Avery Fisher Hall, Carnegie Hall, in other cities, and at the festivals of Tanglewood, Hollywood Bowl and Ravinia. His many New York City engagements included a Carnegie Hall recital and performances with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. In Europe, he toured with Leonard Slatkin and the St. Louis Symphony and appeared with the Royal Philharmonic under the direction of Andre Previn. The forthcoming season brings Mr. Ax on tours with the Houston Symphony throughout the United States (including Carnegie Hall), the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the Israel Philharmonic. He will also tour Japan.

Born in Lwow, Emanuel Ax moved to Winnipeg with his family as a boy. After a year and a half in Canada the family moved to New York. His studies in the Pre-College Division of Juilliard were greatly supported by the sponsorship of the Epstein Scholar Boys Club of America, and he subsequently won the Young Concert Artists' Michaels Award. His only piano teacher was Mieczylaw Munz. Mr. Ax is a graduate of Columbia University, where he majored in French.

He resides in New York City with his wife, pianist, Yoko Nozaki, and their son Joseph, and daughter, Sarah.

YO-YO MA

Cellist Yo-Yo Ma gave his first public recital at the age of 5 and by the time he was 19 he was being compared with such masters as Rostropovich and Casals. Now, at 30, he is one of the most sought after instrumentalists in the world.

In 1978 Yo-Yo Ma won the coveted Avery Fisher Prize and since that time has gone on to appear with all the major orchestras throughout the world, including the Berlin Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Israel Philharmonic, London Symphony and the New York Philharmonic. He often performs with such eminent conductors as Claudio Abbado, Sergiu Comissiona, Herbert von Karajan, Lorin Maazel, Zubin Mehta, Seiji Ozawa and Andre Previn and regularly participates in the festivals of Tanglewood, Ravinia, Blossom, Salzburg and Edinburgh, to name a few. Highly acclaimed for his ensemble playing, Mr. Ma is deeply committed to performing the vast chamber music literature. He has appeared with such artists as Emanuel Ax, Leonard Rose, Pinchas Zukerman, Gidon Kremer and Yehudi Menuhin.

Yo-Yo Ma frequently plays each season in New York to sold-out houses. Performances of his favored Bach Cello Suites (solo) and Suites for Gamba and Harpsichord with Kenneth Cooper in a series of recitals at Alice Tully Hall during the 1981/82 season and later in Paris, London, Munich, Vienna and Edinburgh were met with great enthusiasm from audiences and critics alike. Mr. Ma's debut recording was on Deutsche Grammophon with the Berlin Philharmonic under Herbert von Karajan. Under his exclusive CBS Masterworks contract, Yo-Yo Ma has many best selling albums to his credit. His recording of the six Bach Suites for Unaccompanied Cello won the 1984 Grammy Award, was one of *Time's* "Best of 1984" and *Ovation's* 1984 "First Place Instrumental Solo Recording." Last month Yo-Yo Ma won two Grammy Awards — for the Brahms Sonatas with Emanuel Ax, and for the Best Classical Performance, instrumental soloist, for his performances of the Elgar and Walton Cello Concertos.

Born in Paris in 1955, of Chinese parents, Mr. Ma began his cello studies with his father at the age of 4. Later he studied with Janos Scholz and in 1962 he entered the Juilliard School and began his studies with Leonard Rose. A graduate of Harvard University, Mr. Ma resides with his wife, Jill and son, Nicholas, in Winchester, Massachusetts. His instrument is a Montagnana from Venice, made in 1733.

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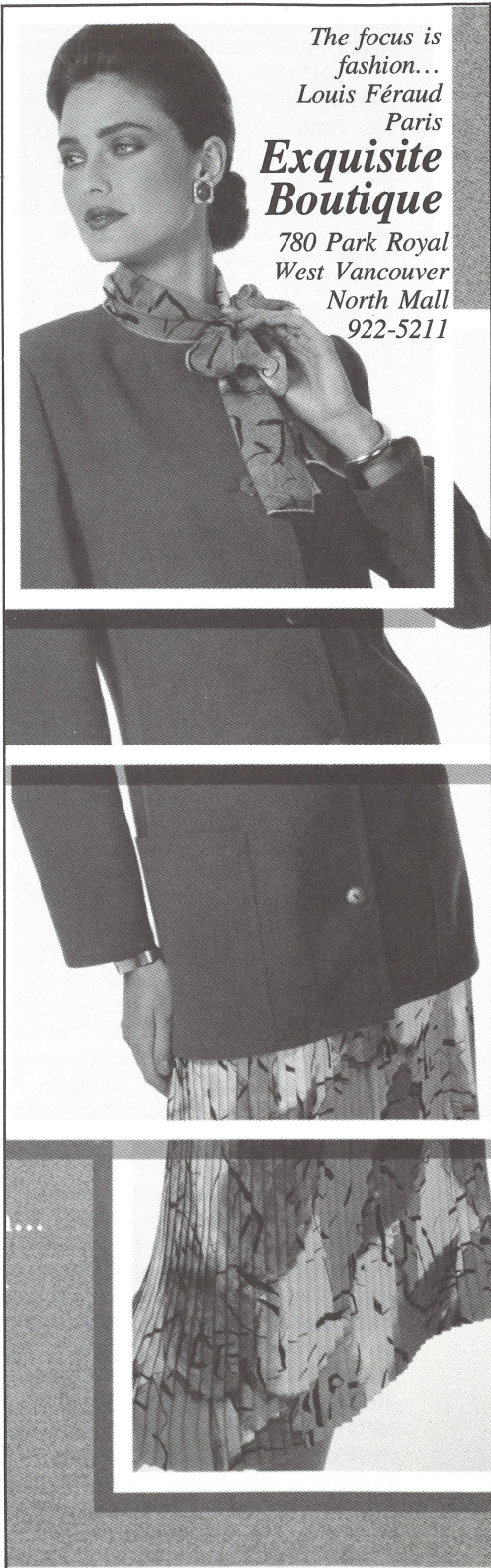
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Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770-1827)

SONATA FOR PIANO AND VIOLONCELLO IN G MINOR, OP.5 NO.2 (1796)

Adagio sostenuto e espressivo
allegro molto piu tost presto
Rondo: Allegro

The young Beethoven composed a number of chamber works and sonatas during his first years in Vienna; these works and Beethoven's own impressive skills as a pianist quickly brought him to the attention of the music-loving nobility, and within a few years the composer was well on his way to widespread recognition.

Beethoven had been encouraged to work in Vienna by his first patron, Count Waldstein, who recommended that he study with the renowned Franz Joseph Haydn in order to receive "the spirit of Mozart from Haydn's hands." Certainly this quintessentially classical orientation is well demonstrated in the Opus 5 cello sonatas written in 1796. Unlike later sonata idioms, classical duo sonatas tend to spotlight the piano with the second instrument providing an obligato accompaniment. (The Opus 5 sonatas were expressly designed for an important performance at the court of Friedrich Wilhelm II, King of Prussia, and the composer himself premiered the works with the cello accompaniment provided by a musician in the King's household, Jean Pierre Duport.)

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

SONATA IN C FOR CELLO AND PIANO, OP.65 (1961)

Allegro
Scherzo — Pizzicato
Elegia
Marcia
Moto perpetuo

In the late 1950's and early 1960's Vancouver audiences were privileged to hear such masterworks as Britten's *Noyes Fludde*, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* and the *War Requiem* within months of their completion (and perhaps a few members of tonight's audience may recall that Britten is one of the few composers ever to have been honoured by the City of Vancouver). The *Cello Sonata* dates from 1960/61 and was the first of a series of works written for the Russian virtuoso Mstislav Rostropovich.

The innocuous title "Sonata in C" belies what is a complex and demanding work of remarkable quality. Britten has constructed a five-movement work on a Bartok-inspired plan: a central *lento* flanked by complementary scherzos, in turn flanked by outer movements in free sonata and rondo form.

The opening *Dialogo* was described by Britten as "a discussion of a tiny motive of a rising and falling second." The following *Scherzo-pizzicato* foreshadows similar music in the popular *Nocturnal* for solo guitar written two years later. Britten scholar Peter Evans calls the keystone *lento* "an elegy of poignant understatement," while the composer summed up the *Marcia* with the offhand comment "the cello plays a rumbustious bass to the jerky tune on the piano." His equally unpretentious assessment of the brilliant *Moto perpetuo* finale is "a Saltando theme dominates the entire movement, frequently changing its character, now high and expressive, now low and grumbling, now gay and carefree."

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August 4th, 1986

Sergei Rachmaninov (1893–1943)

SONATA FOR PIANO AND VIOLONCELLO IN G MINOR, OP.19 (1901)

Lento

Allegro scherzando

Andante


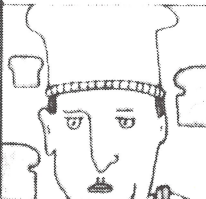



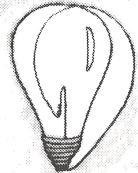
Allegro mosso

After the catastrophic failure of his *First symphony* in 1897, Rachmaninov was virtually unable (and doubtless unwilling) to compose. But after a few fallow years, and with the sustained encouragement of a psychologist he consulted, Rachmaninov was able to resume his career as a composer and completed both the very popular *Second Piano Concerto* and the *Cello Sonata* in 1901.

Much is made of the reactionary posturing of Rachmaninov's later years in the United States, but in his Russian works dating from the turn of the century he demonstrates his true place as an heir of Tchaikovsky and a gifted (if unadventurous) exponent of the late romantic style.

Without the formal rigour of the equally conservative duo sonatas of Brahms, Rachmaninov's *Sonata* is infused with an improvisatory grandiloquence, and a unique sensitivity for cello and piano sonorities. While cast traditionally in four rather extended movements, its most memorable moments are invariably the magnificent melodic passages which crop up with gratifying frequency throughout all sections of this beautiful work.

Program notes by David G. Duke.

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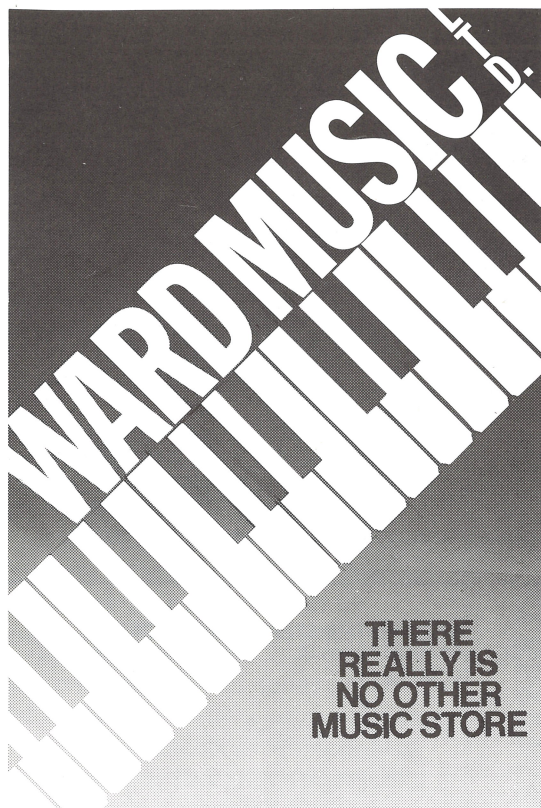
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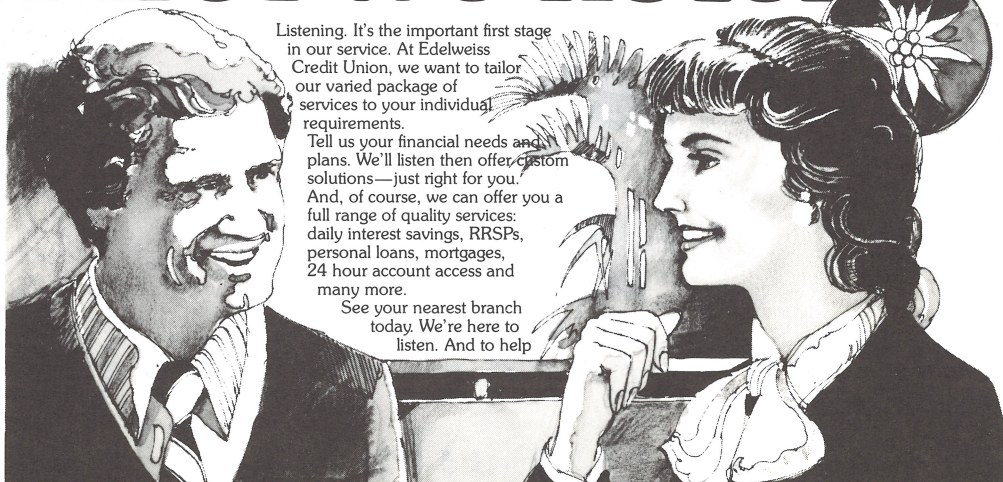
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