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presents

CHRISTIAN TETZLAFF

• VIOLIN •

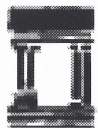
STEFAN LITWIN

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p.s. bring a sweater

Meet the Artists

CHRISTIAN TETZLAFF

Born in Hamburg in 1966, Christian Tetzlaff started playing the violin and the piano at the age of six. While still a young boy, he received several important German music prizes and scholarships. In 1985, he was invited to study with Walter Levin, leader of the LaSalle Quartet, at the Conservatory of Music in Cincinnati. Since 1980, Christian has also been studying with Uwe Haiberg.

In September 1988 Christian Tetzlaff made his professional debut in Munich and Berlin with the Munich Philharmonic under the direction of Sergiu Celibidache. That same year, he made his American debut playing the Schönberg Concerto with the Cleveland Orchestra under the direction of Christoph von Dohnanyi. His performance of this notoriously difficult work brought both audience and orchestra to their feet and he was immediately re-engaged to play in Cleveland as well as tour the Far East with the orchestra. At that time he was also invited to perform with such orchestras as the Detroit, Boston and Toronto Symphonies.

STEFAN LITWIN

Stefan Litwin was born in Mexico City and received most of his education in Switzerland where he studied piano and music theory with Christoph Keller and Jürg Wytenbach. He has lived in the United States since 1984, and has pursued additional studies with Walter Levin (former first violinist of the LaSalle Quartet), Gilbert Kalish and John Lessard.

In recent years Stefan Litwin has been internationally recognized as an outstanding performer of contemporary music as well as an innovative interpreter of works of the 18th and 19th centuries. He has appeared at the Salzburg, Blossom and Ravinia Festivals, and has collaborated in chamber music performances with flutist Aurèle Nicolet, oboist Maurice Bourgue, the LaSalle Quartet, the Vogler Quartet, the Arditti Quartet and the Cincinnati Percussion Group. Litwin also performs regularly with violinist Christian Tetzlaff; together they have just recorded the Sonata for Violin and Piano (1935) of pianist/composer Artur Schnabel (whose music Litwin revives with unusual commitment).

In Europe Christian has been engaged by l'Orchestre National de France, the Residentie Orchestra, Den Haag, the Radio Symphony Orchestra Berlin, the Tonhalle Orchestra, Zürich, the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonic State Orchestra, Hamburg, and the London and BBC Philharmonic Orchestras in Britain, along with many others.

Since 1987 Christian has regularly participated at the prestigious Marlboro Festival. His regular partners in recital are pianists David Levine and Stefan Litwin. Christian Tetzlaff has signed an exclusive recording contract with Virgin Classics.

Tonight's concert, which marks Christian Tetzlaff's Canadian recital debut, is being recorded for broadcast at a later date on CBC Stereo's "Arts National" (105.7 FM).

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He has worked closely with numerous contemporary composers, resulting in many first performances as well as works written especially for him. Litwin's versatility as a musician is also reflected in his special interest for performing lecture recitals. One of these, entitled "Webern and the consequences: a composer's task or resignation" was produced for Swiss National Radio.

Last season's performance highlights include an appearance as soloist in Beethoven's C Major Concerto with the Cleveland Orchestra under the direction of Christoph von Dohnanyi, as well as an Artur Schnabel memorial concert given in the Berlin Philharmonic on the occasion of the 100 year anniversary of the Freie Volksbühne. This season Litwin will again perform in recitals with Christian Tetzlaff, the Arditti String Quartet as well as in numerous solo and lecture recitals in the United States and abroad. He has also been invited to be on faculty at the Steans Institute of the Ravinia Festival this coming summer.

Among Litwin's recordings on Deutsche Grammophon is music of Bach, Beethoven, Schönberg and Webern.

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Programme

Partita II in d minor, BWV 1004
for violin solo

J.S. Bach
(1685-1750)

Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Gigue
Chaconne

The Partita in d minor for violin solo is the second in a set of 6 unaccompanied Sonatas and Partitas written during Bach's tenure (1717-23) as Kapellmeister at the court of young Prince Leopold in Cöthen. Though solo string compositions were definitely uncommon in Bach's day, these works were not without precedent, particularly in Germany where a tradition of composition for solo violin had already been established. It is unlikely that Bach intended these works to be played in public (his music was only used at court at this time); given Bach's pedagogical inclinations, they were most likely meant to serve as study pieces, for they do indeed encompass all aspects of violin technique, and for many years were only played as such.

The Sonatas and Partitas remained unpublished until 1802; until then the music had probably only circulated in handwritten copies. Following publication, the manuscript disappeared until 1890, by which time the music had been forgotten; it had not been included in the first edition of Bach's complete works. The newly-discovered manuscript (incidentally one of the most beautiful of Bach's manuscripts) was offered to Brahms, an avid collector of antiquarian scores, but he declined it. (After many transactions, it eventually ended up in the Berlin Library.) The first public performance of the Sonatas and Partitas is credited to Joseph Joachim, who subsequently prepared a new edition, which was completed after his death and published in 1908.

Much can be said (and has been) about the musical forces at work in Bach's solo violin compositions: how from a single line he creates the illusion of 2 to 4 voices moving contrapuntally, for instance, or the impression of a melody accompanied by a bass line. The utmost concentration and interpretative insight is demanded from the performer to be able to shape the individual movements into logical entities. The d minor Partita opens with the traditional Allemande of the German suite, and ends not with the customary Gigue, but with a Chaconne, a magnificent theme and variation movement that is one of Bach's greatest works, standing at the summit of the entire violin repertoire. The words of Bach scholar Philipp Spitta apply just as much to the whole of Bach's output as they do to the Chaconne: "The overpowering wealth of forms pouring from a few and scarcely noticeable sources displays not only the most perfect knowledge of the technique of the violin, but also the most absolute mastery over an imagination the like of which no composer was ever endowed with."

Sonata for piano and violin in F Major,
KV 377

W.A. Mozart
(1756-1791)

Allegro
Tema (with six variations)
Tempo di Menuetto

Newly-arrived in Vienna in the spring of 1781, summoned by his patron the Archbishop of Salzburg, Mozart became increasingly frustrated by the extent to which his musical activities were curtailed by his employer. Tired of being treated as a mere servant (as he saw it), and anxious to capitalize on the apparent wealth of opportunity, he pressed even harder to be released from the Archbishop's service, and finally achieved his aim in June. He began to teach, and wrote a set of 6 sonatas (of which K377 is one) published in November of that year by Artaria as Opus 2, No. 3. The sonatas are dedicated to one of his pupils, a certain Josepha von Auerhammer, who, for some reason the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians tells us, was musically talented and a true friend, but apparently less than ravishing (Mozart was repulsed by her amorous feelings toward him)!

Dedication aside, a 1783 review of the publication in Cramer's *Magazin der Musik* speaks favourably not only of the richness of the musical ideas and signs of genius displayed by the composer, but also praises the ingenuity of the manner in which the violin accompaniment is combined with the keyboard part, so that the instruments "are always in equal prominence".

This reference to the equality of the parts is interesting, as the accompanied sonata of Mozart's time was primarily a keyboard composition with accompaniment from another instrument, usually violin or flute, that would merely serve to fill out the harmony or add interest to the texture, (and could probably be omitted in many places without affecting the continuity of the music). Mozart's early duo sonatas are of this sort (his first music ever published, in fact, as a boy of 8 in Paris, was a set of accompanied sonatas). By the time of K377 however, no matter what the title, it is clear from the music that the relationship between the two instruments has developed considerably since his earlier works; the violin's status has been elevated from subservient accompaniment to true partner.

INTERMISSION

Programme

Four pieces for violin and piano, Op. 7

Anton von Webern
(1883-1945)

Sehr langsam
Rasch
Sehr langsam
Bewegt

Written during the summer of 1910, the Four Pieces are products of Webern's early experimentation with atonality (meaning literally, absence of tonality). A pupil of Schönberg since 1904, Webern followed in the footsteps of his teacher; his compositions prior to Opus 7 were already departing from tonality. One perhaps inevitable outcome of this compositional direction was the abandonment of thematic development, for that procedure is so inextricably bound to tonal concepts. The Four Pieces then, are not only atonal but athermal as well, and are, not surprisingly, even considering Webern's natural propensity for brevity, very short. (Such compositional premises do not lend themselves very well to any sort of extended structure.) The first piece is only 9 measures long; the remaining pieces have 24, 14, and 15 measures respectively. They are grouped together to provide a maximum of contrast during their short duration; nos. 1 and 3 are slow and somewhat restrained, while 2 and 4 are dynamically volatile. All four make use of a great variety of violin special effects, demanding absolute technical control from the performer.

The fact that several original manuscripts of this work are marked as Opus 6, no. 1 suggests that Webern must have hesitated to designate so short a composition as a complete opus. The Four Pieces were premiered in 1911 in Vienna, at a concert of Webern, Berg and Horwitz presenting their own works, and the first piece was published in a journal the following year — Webern's first composition in print. He continued to revise the pieces until 1922, when the entire score was published by Universal.

Sonata for violin and piano in d minor, Johannes Brahms Op. 108 (1833-1897)

Allegro
Adagio
Un poco presto e con sentimento
Presto agitato

The summer of 1886 was one of chamber music for Brahms: the F Major Cello Sonata, C minor Trio, and Violin Sonatas opp. 100 and 108 all date from his stay on Lake Thun. As was often the case, even with a masterpiece, Brahms was somewhat unsure of the nature of his accomplishment, as he confessed to Clara Schumann, apologizing for not having sent her the manuscript earlier: "The truth is I can never do a piece the credit of believing that it will please anybody."

There is no doubt that Opus 108 is a work of the highest calibre. Conceived in broader terms than his other two violin sonatas, it is in 4 movements instead of the usual 3, and is also of a more brilliant, vehement, and rhetorical nature. The opening Allegro presents highly-charged material with a terseness of expression and concentration of form that is so typical of Brahms' later music. The following Adagio is as relaxed and uncomplicated as the Allegro was not. The third movement, a Scherzo, is still lighter in style, while the fourth movement returns to the turbulence of the opening Allegro. With virtuosic piano writing more suited for the concert hall than the salon, there is no question of the piano providing mere accompaniment. Indeed, Brahms titled the first edition, published in 1889, as "Sonata for Pianoforte and Violin". Opus 108 is dedicated to Hans von Bülow, whose playing of late Beethoven Brahms admired immensely, and who, a few years earlier, had offered Brahms the use of the renowned Meiningen court orchestra as a personal rehearsal orchestra, which greatly facilitated the composition of his Fourth Symphony.

— Programme notes by B. Martineau



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The Vancouver Recital Society and the Vancouver Chamber Music Festival gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Department of Communications and the Challenge '90 Program; the Government of British Columbia through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Recreation and Culture; the City of Vancouver; the Touring Office of the Canada Council; the Leon and Thea Koerner Foundation; the Hamber Foundation; the McLean Foundation, and the Cherniavsky Junior Club for the Performing Arts.

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The mandate of the Goethe Institute is "the promotion of German language study and international cultural co-operation". As a cultural centre, the Goethe Institute represents and reflects the diversified cultural life of the Federal Republic of Germany.

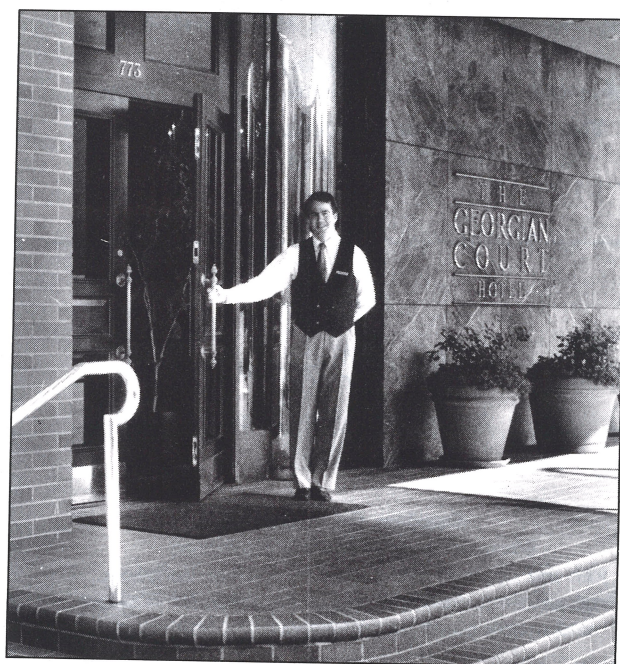
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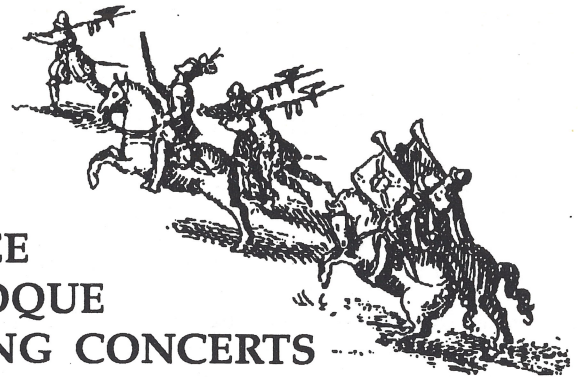
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