

2-7-2013

President's Piano Series

Grace Fong
Chapman University

Louise Thomas
Chapman University

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President's Piano Series

Grace Fong & Louise Thomas,
duo piano concert

February 7, 2013

Grace Fong, Artistic Director



spring 2013

 CHAPMAN
UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF PERFORMING ARTS

COLLEGE OF PERFORMING ARTS
theatre music dance

SPRING 2013 calendar highlights

february

February 1

University Singers Post-Tour Concert

Stephen Coker, Conductor

February 7

President's Piano Series

Grace Fong & Louise Thomas, duo piano concert

February 14-16, 21-23

Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare

Directed by Thomas Bradac

march

March 7

President's Piano Series

Sergei Babayan

March 8

Chapman Chamber Orchestra & University Singers

Daniel Alfred Wachs, Music Director and Conductor

Stephen Coker, Conductor

March 14-16

Concert Intime

Directed by Alicia Guy

april

April 4

President's Piano Series

John Perry

April 4-6, 11-13

Stage Door

by George S. Kaufman & Edna Ferber

Directed by Nina LeNoir

April 19-21

Opera Chapman presents

The Merry Widow by Franz Lehar

Peter Atherton, Artistic Director

Carol Neblett, Associate Director

April 24-27

Student Produced One Acts

may

May 8-11

Spring Dance Concert

Directed by Jennifer Backhaus

May 11

Sholund Scholarship Concert

Daniel Alfred Wachs, Conductor

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

College of Performing Arts

presents the

President's Piano Series

Duo Piano Recital

Grace Fong, piano

Louise Thomas, piano

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February 7, 2013 ■ 7:30 P.M.

Salmon Recital Hall

Program

Concertino for 2 Pianos, op. 94

D. Shostakovich
(1906-1975)

Fuga y misterio

Milonga del angel

La Muerte del Angel

A. Piazzolla
(1921-1992)
arr. P. Ziegler

Les Préludes, S. 97

F. Liszt
(1811-1886)

~Intermission~

Suite No. 2, op. 17

Introduction (Alla Marcia)

Valse (Presto)

Romance (Andantino)

Tarantelle (Presto)

S. Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)

*The College of Performing Arts would like to thank
the Rhea Black family for its generous financial support
of the President's Piano Series.*

Artists

Dr. Grace Fong is currently the Director of Keyboard Studies at Chapman University Hall-Musco Conservatory of Music where she was awarded the Valerie Scudder faculty excellence award at the Hall-Musco Conservatory of Music. Praised as "positively magical," an artist of "rare eloquence and grace," American pianist Grace Fong enjoys a career as an international concerto soloist, recitalist, chamber musician and teacher. She has gained critical acclaim in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia, making appearances at major venues around the world, including Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, Severance Hall in Cleveland, Ohio, Phillips Collection, Disney Hall, Hollywood Bowl, Great Hall in Leeds, UK, the Liszt Academy in Budapest, Konzerthaus Dortmund, Germany, among others.

Radio/television broadcasts have included British Broadcasting Company, WCLV-FM 104.9, KUSC 91.5 FM in Los Angeles, the "Emerging Young Artists" series in New York, and "Performance Today" on National Public Radio. Performances with orchestras have included the Halle Orchestra in the United Kingdom, the Polish Chamber Orchestra, the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Phoenix Symphony, Santa Fe Symphony Orchestra, Music Academy of the West Festival Orchestra, the Olympia Philharmonic Orchestra, The Shreveport Symphony, the Chamber Orchestra of Southwest Virginia, the New Hampshire Music Festival Orchestra, among others.

Described by one critic as "absolutely astounding-and now I've run out of praiseworthy adjectives," Dr. Fong is a prizewinner of numerous international competitions, including the prestigious Leeds International Piano Competition in the United Kingdom, Bosendorfer International Piano Competition, San Antonio International Piano Competition, Viardo International Piano Competition, and the Cleveland International Piano Competition. Dr. Fong is also the first female winner in twelve years of one of America's most prestigious piano awards, the Christel De Haan Classical Fellowship of the American Pianists Association. Previously, Dr. Fong has won the Grand Prize in piano from the National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts and was thereafter named a "Presidential Scholar in the Arts", and was presented a medallion by former President Clinton at the White House. Other prizes include Gold Medalist for the Wideman International Piano Competition, the winner of the Music Academy of

Artists

the West Concerto Competition, the winner of the Cleveland Institute of Music Concerto Competition, 1st Prize in the Los Angeles Liszt Competition, 1st Prize in the Edith Knox Performance Competition.

Dr. Fong is a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music where she studied with Sergei Babayan who describes Dr. Fong as "not only a true artist and an exciting virtuoso, but a sensitive poet who can speak about the most important of subjects through the craft of her hands." During the course of her undergraduate studies at the University of Southern California, Dr. Fong completed a double major and minor; she was awarded the prestigious Renaissance Scholar Prize, and was named "The USC Thornton School of Music Keyboard Department's - Most Outstanding Student - B.M." Former teachers include Sergei Babayan, John Perry, Louise Lepley, Paulina Drake, and Norberto Cappone.

Dr. Fong is also faculty at Claremont Graduate University, teaching and advising Doctoral Candidates of Piano Performance. An enthusiastic supporter of the education of young musicians, Dr. Fong has served as guest artist and teacher at the Innsbrook Summer Festival, the New Hampshire Music Festival, the Salt Spring Piano Festival, the Montecito Summer Festival, the Sitka Chamber Music Festival, the Missouri River Arts Festival, and the Schlern International Music Festival faculty. For more information, please visit: www.pianistgracefong.com

Pianist **Louise Thomas** is Director of Keyboard Collaborative Arts at Chapman University. She received her doctorate in piano performance from the University of Southern California where she studied with John Perry and Alan Smith.

A native of Ireland, Louise Thomas has concertized extensively throughout Europe, North America and Asia at such notable concert venues as the Tchaikovsky Conservatoire in Moscow, the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing and Carnegie Hall in New York City.

After completing undergraduate musicology studies at Trinity College, Dublin where she had developed a passion for music of the 20th century, Louise was offered a German Government scholarship (DAAD) to study piano performance

Artists

at the Hochschule in Hannover, Germany. While a student there, she won second prize at the Ibla-Ragusa competition in Sicily where she was also awarded the Bela Bartók Prize. Subsequently in 1998, she won the concerto competition at the University of Southern California and played under the baton of the late Sergiu Comissiona. This recording is currently available on K-USC's "Kids and Parents" CD.

A highly active collaborative pianist, Dr. Thomas has made CD recordings in Germany (as part of the chamber music festival, "Schwetzinger Festspielen"), at the Banff Center for the Arts in Canada with the Irish Contemporary Music group, Nua Nós, as well as appearing on numerous radio broadcasts for Irish Radio, BBC Radio Northern Ireland, Moscow radio, K-USC and K-MZT in Los Angeles. She has also played live and recorded many times for RTE (Irish National Television) and the nationally distributed Ovation Arts Channel in Los Angeles. Her recordings are available at iTunes.com

Louise Thomas has been invited onto the faculty of several summer programs. She has been the vocal coach at "La Fabbrica" in Tuscany and since 2003 has been the Festival pianist and vocal coach at the summer program of Idyllwild Arts Academy in California.

In 2007, she performed a program of "California Composers Today" at Carnegie Hall, continuing her commitment to the music of today.

Program Notes

Concertino for 2 Pianos, op. 94 by D. Shostakovich

Among friendliest of Shostakovich's works is the Concertino for Two Pianos that he composed in 1954 for his gifted son Maxim. Maxim premiered the work at an all-Shostakovich concert on November 8, 1954; father and son later subsequently recorded the Concertino together. The Concertino, is laid out in sonata form with introduction. Two sharply contrasted motives — an ominous unison theme in dotted rhythms and a hymn-like strain — alternate in the introduction in a manner reminiscent of the slow movement of Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto (in which Franz Liszt discerned Orpheus taming the Furies). The main theme is in the nature of a zesty march; the second theme turns the dotted rhythms and step-wise motion of the introduction's opening motive into a spirited quick-step. The return of the hymnal phrase from the introduction provides a bridge to the recapitulation of the earlier themes. The final recall of the hymnal phrase not only marks the arrival at the coda, but also provides a quiet foil for the brief but excited dash to the end.

~Dr. Richard E. Rodda

Three Pieces by Astor Piazzolla (arr. P. Ziegler)

Ástor Piazzolla (1921-1992) pretty much single-handedly reinvented the Argentine national dance, the tango, transforming it into a new style aptly called *nuevo tango* ("new tango"). Born in Argentina, Piazzolla spent most of his childhood in New York, and there he gained exposure to and a fondness for jazz and classical music. But through his father's influence he also gained proficiency on the *bandoneón*, a type of concertina that is a staple of Argentine tango ensembles, and when he returned to Argentina in 1937 he played with some of the leading bands in Buenos Aires. He also began the serious study of composition with noted composer Alberto Ginastera, and for an early symphony he won a grant in 1953 from the French government to study in Paris with legendary composition teacher Nadia Boulanger. Boulanger, whose illustrious students ranged from Aaron Copland and Elliott Carter to Quincy Jones and Burt Bacharach, found Piazzolla's music was well-crafted but too derivative of Bartók, Stravinsky and Ravel. When she finally got him to play for her some of the music he wrote for his cabaret band, she convinced him to toss out his other works and concentrate on what was uniquely his own.

When he returned to Argentina in 1955, his "new tango," which infused traditional elements with characteristics of jazz and incorporated contrapuntal techniques and formal elements adapted from his classical studies, was met with resistance in his homeland, but Europeans and North Americans were captivated by it and his international career blossomed. It is estimated that he composed over a staggering 3000 pieces, and he recorded about 500 of them himself!

Program Notes

The three pieces performed today have been arranged for two pianos by Pablo Ziegler, Piazzolla's regular pianist for eleven years.

Les Préludes, S. 97 by F. Liszt

Franz Liszt's *Les Préludes* represents the quintessence of the Romantic spirit of the nineteenth century. Liszt published this version of *Les Préludes* for two pianos, but the work is more known in its version as a symphonic poem, a term coined by Liszt himself to describe a one-movement orchestral composition accompanied by a text. Symphonic poems typically include several contrasting sections with some type of unifying feature, such as tonal relationships or thematic connections. Thus the symphonic poem reflects the close ties between music and literature or other extra-musical associations, a characteristic typical of the Romantic era.

Scholars have debated the literary links to *Les Préludes*. It may be based on an overture, now lost, to an oratorio with a text by Autran. Another possibility lies in Liszt's 1854 revision of the work, which adds "after Lamartine" to the title, suggesting that there could be a link to one of his poems. Regardless of Liszt's intentions, the succession of episodes in the composition can be interpreted as running parallel to Lamartine's poem.

Les Préludes also provides an outstanding example of Liszt's technique known as thematic transformation. During the nineteenth century several composers, notably Hector Berlioz, Richard Wagner, and Liszt, developed techniques for manipulating their melodies in such ways that the same melody assumed different moods and characters depending on the tempo, instrumentation, and accompaniment. Thus the theme is transformed with each different context.

Suite No. 2, op. 17 by S. Rachmaninoff

Between December 1900 and April 1901 Rachmaninoff composed the *Suite No. 2 for Two Pianos*. Rachmaninoff and Alexander Ziloti gave the first performance of the *Suite* in Moscow on November 24, 1901. This is big music – ebullient and powerful – and its good tunes and rich sonority have made it a favorite with duo-pianists. The four movements rest on some unusual key progressions, and harmonically the *Suite* concludes far from its beginning. Each of the movements has a title as well as an Italian tempo indication. The *Introduction*, in heroic C major, has a firm, declarative opening that gives way to a more poised (but still quite animated) second subject. Its propulsive rhythms continue throughout, even as the movement draws to a quiet close. The second movement, a *Waltz* in G major, opens with a burst of shining energy from which the broad waltz melody

Program Notes

gradually emerges and then develops at length. The *Romance*, in A-flat major, is based on one of those wonderful Rachmaninoff melodies – deep and dark – that eventually grows to a ringing climax before the movement concludes peacefully. The finale, a *Tarantella* in the unexpected key of C minor, is based on a theme Rachmaninoff is said to have found in a collection of old tunes during his visit to Genoa and Milan the summer before composing the *Suite*. The energy that has characterized the entire work returns here with a vengeance, eventually driving this movement to a thunderous conclusion that remains unremittingly in C minor.

Rachmaninoff recorded many of his own works, but never this *Suite*. He did, however, continue to perform it – and under some unusual circumstances. Late in life, Rachmaninoff became good friends with Vladimir Horowitz and greatly respected the younger man's abilities. Occasionally – and for family members only – they would perform two-piano music together, and the *Second Suite* was one of the works they would play. Rachmaninoff's biographer Sergei Bertensson was present at the composer's home in Beverly Hills in June 1942, only nine months before his death, and left this account of a Rachmaninoff-Horowitz performance of this *Suite*: "It is impossible to word my impression of this event. 'Power' and 'joy' are the two words that come first to mind – expressive power, and joy experienced by the two players, each fully aware of the other's greatness. After the last note no one spoke – time seemed to have stopped."

~Eric Bromberger



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The James L. Doti President's Piano Series

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FEBRUARY 7
7:30 p.m.
Duo Piano Concert

Grace Fong

Praised as "positively magical," an artist of "rare eloquence and grace," recitalist, chamber musician and teacher.



Louise Thomas

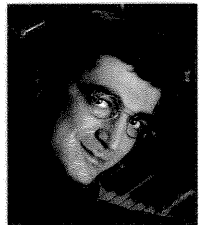
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Sergei Babayan

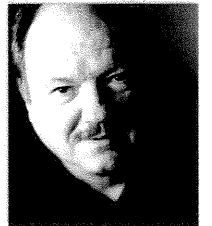
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