



114th Season

Thursday, September 30, 2010 • 7:30 pm

At the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall, Second & State Streets, Troy, NY.

Pre-concert talk at 6:30 pm, Rensselaer County Historical Soc., 57 2nd St., Troy.

GARRICK OHLSSON

Piano

Chopin Bicentennial Program

Nocturne in F Major, Op. 15, No. 1

Etudes, Op. 25 No. 1 in A-flat Major
 No. 2 in F minor
 No. 5 in E minor
 No. 6 in G-sharp minor
 No. 7 in C-sharp minor

Polonaise in F-sharp minor, Op. 44

Mazurka in A minor, Op. 17, No. 4

Scherzo No. 1 in B minor, Op. 20

INTERMISSION

Barcarolle in F-sharp Major, Op. 60

Mazurka in C-sharp minor, Op. 50, No. 3

Sonata No. 3 in B minor, Op. 58

Mr. Ohlsson may be heard on Arabesque, Bridge, BMG, Hanssler, Telarc, and EMI labels.

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All programs, dates and times are subject to change. All sales are final.



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Garrick Ohlsson, *piano*

Since his triumph as winner of the 1970 Chopin International Piano Competition, pianist Garrick Ohlsson has established himself worldwide as a musician of magisterial interpretive and technical prowess. Although he has long been regarded as one of the world's leading exponents of the music of Frédéric Chopin, Mr. Ohlsson commands an enormous repertoire, which ranges over the entire piano literature. A student of the late Claudio Arrau, Mr. Ohlsson has come to be noted for his masterly performances of the works of Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, as well as the Romantic repertoire. His concerto repertoire alone is unusually wide and eclectic – ranging from Haydn and Mozart to works of the 21st century – and to date he has at his command some 80 concertos.

In recognition of the bicentenary of Chopin's birthday Mr. Ohlsson will present a series of all-Chopin recital programs in Seattle, Berkeley and La Jolla culminating at Lincoln Center in fall and winter of 2010. In conjunction with that project a documentary "The Art of Chopin" based on Chopin's life and his music featuring Mr. Ohlsson, co-produced by Polish, French, British and Chinese television stations, is planned for autumn 2010 release. In summer of 2010, he was featured in all-Chopin programs at Ravinia and Tanglewood festivals as appearances in Taipei, Beijing, Melbourne and Sydney.

In 2010-2011, Mr. Ohlsson will open the season in Carnegie Hall with Orpheus Chamber Orchestra followed by return visits to the Orchestras of Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, National Symphony, Milwaukee, Toronto, New World (Miami) and San Diego. In Europe, he will visit orchestras in Sweden, Denmark, Spain and England concluding his Chopin recital project in Detroit and New York by December.

Highlights during the 2009-2010 season included Martinu's rarely performed Concerto no. 4 with the New York Philharmonic and the BBC Scottish Symphony as well as appearances with the symphony orchestras of San Francisco, Houston, Atlanta, Vancouver, Indianapolis, San Diego, Milwaukee, Minneapolis and Baltimore. He was heard in solo recital in Chicago, Fort Worth, and Philadelphia and in a special gala concert presented in Chopin's birth house in Warsaw on March 1st. Mr. Ohlsson's debut in Russia took place during St. Petersburg's winter festival in December 2009, when he appeared both in recital and with the St. Petersburg Philharmonic.

During the summer of 2006, Mr. Ohlsson presented the complete cycle of Beethoven piano sonatas in both the Ravinia and Tanglewood festivals, a cycle he performed for the first time in the summer of 2005 at Switzerland's prestigious Verbier Festival.

Mr. Ohlsson is an avid chamber musician who has collaborated with the Cleveland, Emerson, Takács and Tokyo string quartets, among other ensembles. Together with violinist Jorja Fleezanis and cellist Michael Grebanier, he is a founding member of the San Francisco-based FOG Trio.

A prolific recording artist, Mr. Ohlsson can be heard on the Arabesque, RCA Victor Red Seal, Angel, Bridge, BMG, Delos, Hänssler, Nonesuch, Telarc, and Virgin Classics labels. His undertaking of the complete Beethoven sonatas for Bridge Records has already resulted in 8 discs, the third of which won a Grammy Award for Best Instrumental Soloist Performance. In the fall of 2008 the English label Hyperion re-released his 16-disc set of the complete works of Chopin and soon to be released a disc of Brahms piano works.

A native of White Plains, N.Y., Mr. Ohlsson began his piano studies at the age of 8. He attended the Westchester Conservatory of Music and at 13 entered The Juilliard School in New York City. His musical development has been influenced in completely different ways by a succession of distinguished teachers, most notably Claudio Arrau, Olga Barabini, Tom Lishman, Sascha Gorodnitzki, Rosina Lhévinne and Irma Wolpe. Although he won First Prizes at the 1966 Busoni Competition in Italy and 1968 Montréal Piano Competition, it was his 1970 triumph at the Chopin Competition in Warsaw, where he won the Gold Medal that brought him worldwide recognition as one of the finest pianists of his generation. Since then he has made nearly a dozen tours of Poland, where he retains immense personal popularity. Mr. Ohlsson was awarded the Avery Fisher Prize in 1994 and received the 1998 University Musical Society Distinguished Artist Award in Ann Arbor, Mich. In February 2008, he won a Grammy Award for Best Instrumental Soloist Performance (without Orchestra) for his Beethoven Sonatas, Vol. 3 (Bridge Records, Inc.). He makes his home in San Francisco.

A Note from the Artist: The Chopin Paradox

by Garrick Ohlsson

Chopin stands at the cusp of several worlds. Born to a Polish mother and a Polonized French Father, he was formed artistically and culturally in Warsaw. Setting out to conquer Europe he instead spent most of the second half of his life in Paris. Success came to him at the outset of his career and with it the adulation of everyone from the unsophisticated music lover to the greatest musical and artistic minds of his time—and such it has been ever since. In his music Chopin embodies refinement and elegance, qualities which conceal a passionate, volcanic nature, “Cannons buried in flowers,” according to Schumann.

He considered himself fundamentally a classicist—his gods were Bach and Mozart, with a little Bel Canto thrown in—yet, from his youth he was a Wild Child, pushing harmonic development to its extremes. He drove audiences wild with subtle magic rather than noisy rhetoric, yet he disliked playing in public. He would improvise a bewitching nocturne, and then work tortuously for six weeks to recapture on paper his spontaneous inspiration.

Chopin and I are a strange pair. He never weighed more than 100 pounds, endured fragile health, and loathed playing in public. I share none of these qualities. Indeed, the great teacher Rosina Lhevinne discouraged me from entering the Warsaw Chopin Competition because she felt that the Francophile Poles prized refinement over the large-scaled, muscular American style which, at the age of 22, I

represented. But I remembered what she told me when I first played for her, “Chopin is your métier, my dear,” and in 1970 Warsaw embraced me.

As a teenager, I preferred Liszt to Chopin, the heroic to the inward-poetic (for the same reason I preferred Richard Strauss to Wagner; he made more of that wonderful noisy noise). By my late teen-hood, Chopin had begun to inhabit me. Of course, for any serious pianist, Chopin becomes a touchstone; he teaches you how to play, the use of your hands, sonority, pedaling. You learn such lessons with other great composers, but in no other composer is the spiritual-emotional content so one with the physical-pianistic. For example, the beloved Etude, Op. 10, No. 3 sounds more like a beautiful nocturne. Yet the melody has to be played with the weak fingers of the right hand, above an accompaniment in the thumb and forefinger, a challenge that teaches two levels of sonority in one hand. All of this is above a not-simple two-voice texture in the left hand. These accompaniments, discreet and delicate, serve to cradle the melody and enhance it with the magical soft resonance of their overtones. The tune, played by a violin or sung, would remain a good tune, but would lose its glow. The emotional-musical content is born of the instrument.

That, in brief, is Chopin’s special genius.

After winning the Chopin Competition, I was often asked by friends and interviewers if I was pleased to be able to move on from Chopin to other composers. On the contrary, my love and respect for him has only deepened. Although I feel I am in no way a specialist, Chopin remains my lodestar. He is the composer to whom I return again and again.

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