

SALIDA ASPEN CONCERTS 2006

Sunday, July 9, 2006

John Held Auditorium

ASPEN MUSIC FESTIVAL

Alan Fletcher, President and CEO
David Zinman, Music Director
Deborah Barnekow, Salida Program Director

Collegiate Peaks Bank and Salida Concerts, Inc.
are pleased to present

A RECITAL BY DAVID FINCKEL, *cello*,
AND WU HAN, *piano*

PROGRAM

Sonata for Cello and Piano, op. 65

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

1. Dialogo
2. Scherzo pizzicato
3. Elegia
4. Marcia
5. Moto perpetuo

Sonata for Cello and Piano in D minor, op 40

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

1. Allegro Non-Troppo – Largo
2. Allegro
3. Largo
4. Allegro

INTERMISSION

Sonata for Arpeggione in A minor, D821

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

1. Allegro Moderato
2. Adagio
3. Allegretto

The audience is requested not to applaud between movements. Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of management. Those with electronic devices of any kind are asked to silence them before the concert. Cameras, recording equipment, food, and beverages are not permitted. In consideration of the performing artists and members of the audience, anyone who wishes to leave before the end of the performance is asked to do so between numbers. Adults are responsible for the conduct of their children.

Cellist **David Finckel** and pianist **Wu Han** rank among the most esteemed and influential classical musicians in the world today. The talent, energy, imagination and dedication they bring to their multi-faceted endeavors as concert performers, recording artists, educators, artistic administrators and cultural entrepreneurs, go unmatched. Their duo performances have garnered superlatives from the press, public, and presenters alike. London's Musical Opinion said of their Wigmore Hall debut: "They enthralled both myself and the audience with performances whose idiomatic command, technical mastery and unsullied integrity of vision made me think right back to the days of Schnabel and Fournier, Solomon and Piatigorsky."

The duo's engagements take them to some of the most prestigious venues and concert series across the United States, including San Francisco Performances, Stanford Lively Arts, New York's Lincoln Center and 92nd Street Y, Washington's Kennedy Center, Smithsonian Institute, and Dumbarton Oaks, Wisconsin's Union Theater, Milwaukee's Pabst Theater, UCLA's Performing Arts Series, Atlanta's Spivey Hall, the University of Chicago's Mandel Hall, Boston's Gardner Museum, Princeton University Concerts, the University of Iowa's Hancher Auditorium, the Cleveland Chamber Music Society, New Orleans Friends of Chamber Music, Santa Barbara's UCSB Arts and Letters, and Aspen's Harris Concert Hall. In February 2006, the duo made their Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center recital debut.

The duo's international engagements have taken them to Mexico, Canada, the Far East, Scandinavia and continental Europe to unanimous critical acclaim. Highlights from recent seasons include their debuts in Germany and at Finland's Kuhmo Festival, their presentation of the complete Beethoven cycle in Tokyo, and their signature all-Russian program at London's Wigmore Hall.

David Finckel and Wu Han's wide-ranging musical activities also include the launch of ArtistLed, the first musician-directed and Internet-based recording company. All seven ArtistLed recordings have received critical acclaim and are available via the company's Website at www.artistled.com. The duo's "Russian Classics" recording, featuring works by Rachmaninov, Prokofiev, and Shostakovich, received BBC Music Magazine's coveted "Editor's Choice" award. The 2005-06 season sees ArtistLed's eighth release, featuring the cello sonatas of Johannes Brahms.

In recognition of their widespread contributions to the field of chamber music and their artistic excellence both on and off stage, David Finckel and Wu Han were named Artistic Directors of The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in 2004. They are also the founders and Artistic Directors of Music@Menlo, a chamber music festival in Silicon Valley that has garnered international acclaim since its inception in 2003. Prior to launching Music@Menlo, Wu Han and David Finckel served for three seasons as Artistic Directors of SummerFest La Jolla.

David Finckel and Wu Han have been the subject of numerous feature stories around the globe in publications including The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, San Francisco Chronicle, Toronto Star, New York Newsday, The Mercury News, Billboard, The Strad, BBC Music Magazine, Time Out London and Tokyo's Ongaku-no-Tomo. On television, they have appeared on NBC Nightly News, A&E Breakfast with the Arts, CNN's Turner Entertainment Report and European Business News.

The duo's repertoire spans virtually the entire literature for cello and piano, with an equal emphasis on the classics and the contemporaries. Their twentieth-century repertoire includes all the significant works, and their recitals feature a growing number of works written specifically for them by such distinguished American composers as Bruce Adolphe, Augusta Read Thomas, and the Russian-born composer Lera Auerbach.

For many years, David Finckel and Wu Han taught alongside the late Isaac Stern at Carnegie Hall and the Jerusalem Music Center. They appear annually on the Aspen Music Festival's Distinguished Artist Master Class series and in various educational outreach programs across the country. David Finckel and Wu Han reside in New York with their twelve-year-old daughter Lilian.

COMPOSER NOTES

Benjamin Britten's fame rests to a large extent on his vocal compositions and his works for the theater. Indeed, anyone who knows Britten's vocal music is intensely aware that the composer's interest in verbal articulation is activated even in purely instrumental works. In his compositions for cello and piano (there are at least two sonatas and two suites) he rarely lets the cello "sing" in the old-fashioned sense of the word but rather commands it to speak or to "recite" almost constantly.

The present work, dating from 1961, is dedicated to Rostropovich: Britten rarely composed solo or chamber works without having a firm idea about executants as well as location. In the opening dialogue the cello part impresses us immediately with its declamatory, noncantilena quality. As the movement progresses, one of Britten's beautiful, characteristic scalar themes emerges (modally) colored with an inserted large-interval leap; nonetheless, the cello as a cantilena instrument does not really come into its own before the first of the two Elegies begins.

All in all, the work is consistently dramatic and exciting. Britten manages here, as in almost all his works, to be original and himself, within the general framework of tonality. This work also incorporates its quota of "whim"—a national English feature, one might say, since Shakespeare and Ben Jonson. Both the cello and the piano maintain a great deal of independence. The piano might take up the material presented by the cello and vice versa; yet there is hardly any "accompaniment." The "dialogue" idea, strongly emphasized at the beginning, is maintained throughout most of the work.

The Sonata consists of five character pieces, of which each one tries to say something radically different. The first movement uses a miniature sonata form. Constant shifting of beats (sounding against the meter) emphasizes articulation in all five movements. To bring out the fanciful or the grotesque, the composer combines incongruous and heterogenous musical details within narrow spatial confines. Exploring new ways and areas of expression, he stays away from known patterns, including those that he himself created. (Notes by Kurt Oppens, AMFS Archive)

Dmitri Shostakovich—The Cello Sonata, op. 40, is one of the last chamber works Shostakovich wrote before he was publicly disgraced by Stalin and *Pravda*; one of the last works, that is, that he wrote without the feeling of the ice-cold eye of the censor upon him. The work was composed in 1934, shortly after the immensely successful premiere in Leningrad of his opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. During the same year Shostakovich produced two film scores, incidental music for a play by Balzac, and a full-length ballet; he certainly was at the height of his creative powers. And if the Cello Sonata truly depicts the composer's mind at that time, we would say he was insouciant, given to pranks and light-mindedness in the display of his astonishing talent.

The four-movement structure of the Sonata puts the composer clearly into the neoclassical fold, a label we would be hesitant to attach to his later works. We recognize the true Shostakovich by his long melodic lines (the first movement's first theme, and the theme of the Largo), but we might feel a bit dubious about the authenticity of the second theme in the first movement. If it could speak, it might say "uncle" to Prokofiev. It is one of those themes—there are several in the Sonata—which the composer seems to throw at us with the works: "That's for you, you Philistine!"

The first movement, sonatina more than sonata, begins the recapitulation with the second theme and then adds the first theme in slow tempo (largo), to form the coda. The second movement, clearly meant to be a scherzo, forces both instruments into wild arpeggios in the trio section—easy to do for the piano, but not at all easy and also not very grateful for the cello. A prank, maybe, to tease the cellist? The pianist, who might feel a bit neglected in the Largo, definitely has to prove himself in the last movement when, shortly before the end, he has to show his mettle and deliver a goodly supply of virtuoso passages—out of the blue, so to speak. This Allegretto is definitely a fun movement, and we feel here that things could go anywhere at any moment (Notes by Kurt Oppens, AMFS Archive)

Franz Schubert—Like Mozart's works for glass harmonica, Haydn's baryton trios, or Debussy's *Danse sacree et Danse profane* for a special chromatic harp, Schubert's lovely *Arpeggione* Sonata was composed for an instrument that flourished briefly but was destined to become a museum piece. Schubert and he alone used the name *arpeggione* for the *Bogen-Gitarre* (bowed guitar) or *gitarre d'amour* invented about 1813 by Viennese instrument maker Johann Georg Stauffer, who himself called it a *guitar-violoncello*. This last name fits best because the instrument actually is a cross between a guitar and a cello: it has the six strings of a guitar (with the same tuning), its frets, and its flowing shape, but the size of a cello, with its curved fingerboard and curved bridge so that it can be played with a bow. Schubert was asked in 1824 to compose a piece for his friend Vincenz Schuster to play on this instrument, and the Sonata in A minor was the happy result.

Schubert's is the only piece for the bowed guitar that has made its way into the mainstream repertoire. The Sonata was published almost half a century after Schubert's death, at which time it also included an alternate cello part—and indeed it is most often played on the cello, despite the slightly unidiomatic fit. Myriad other instrumentalists—guitarists, violinists, violists, bassists, and even wind and brass players—have eagerly added it to their repertoire, considering it fair game with the obsolescence of the bowed-guitar.

The Sonata begins with a flowing sonata-form movement that sounds sometimes meditative as at the opening, or dancelike as in the second theme, but in general avoids the elements of tragedy or storminess that often go along with minor keys. It is in fact the fluid alternation of minor and major that provides some of the movement's greatest charms.

The relatively brief slow movement takes us into the realm of song, despite its lack of text. In several celebrated cases Schubert transplanted a song he had written into an instrumental movement—in the *Trout* Quintet, the *Wanderer* Fantasy, and the *Death and the Maiden* Quartet—but since singable melodies poured out of Schubert at an amazing rate, some never went through the phase of first setting a text. A gently rocking piano accompaniment supports the simple, expressive melody of the cello, which again slips effortlessly between major and minor. A new section is signaled by the chiming of the piano as the cello plays underneath—a vaguely disquieting section, but one which contains some lovely harmonic surprises. Before any other sections materialize, Schubert leads us through a little cadenza directly into the last movement, giving this slow movement, in hindsight, the function of an extended introduction.

The last movement employs a deceptively simple folklike tune for its rondo refrain, which again shifts smoothly between the major and minor modes. Schubert contrasts this with a more energetic almost Gypsy-ish episode and later with a charming little Viennese section that capriciously tugs and pulls. A bit of cello pizzicato and light-textured piano variation ensues before the energetic music returns, and the piece concludes with the cozy rondo theme subjected to some intriguing harmonic turns. *(Notes by Jane Vial Jaffe)*