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Guest Artist Recital: Peter Serkin

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Peter Serkin Piano

Wednesday
November 28, 2007
8:15 p.m.

Ford Hall, James J. Whalen Center for Music
Ithaca College

ITHACA
Peter Serkin

Recognized as an artist of passion and integrity, American pianist Peter Serkin is one of the most thoughtful and individualistic musicians appearing before the public today. Throughout his career he has successfully conveyed the essence of five centuries of repertoire, and his performances with symphony orchestras, recital appearances, chamber music collaborations, and recordings are respected worldwide.

Peter Serkin's rich musical heritage extends back several generations: his grandfather was violinist and composer Adolf Busch, and his father was pianist Rudolf Serkin. In 1958, at age 11, he entered the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where he was a student of Lee Luv1s1, M1 eczyslaw Horszowski, and Rudolf Serkin. He later continued his studies with Ernst Oster, Marcel Moyse, and Karl Ulrich Schnabel. In 1959, he made his Marlboro Music Festival and New York City debuts with conductor Alexander Schneider. Invitations to perform with the Cleveland Orchestra and George Szell in Cleveland and Carnegie Hall, and with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Eugene Ormandy in Philadelphia and Carnegie Hall, soon followed. He has since performed with the world's major symphony orchestras with such eminent conductors as Seiji Ozawa, Pierre Boulez, Daniel Barenboim, Claudio Abbado, Simon Rattle, James Levine, Herbert Blomstedt, and Christoph Eschenbach. Also a dedicated chamber musician, he has collaborated with Alexander Schneider, Pamela Frank, Yo-Yo Ma, and the Budapest, Guarneri, and Orion string quartets, and Tashi, of which he was a founding member.

An avid proponent of the music of many of the 20th and 21st century's most distinguished composers, Serkin has been instrumental in bringing the music of Schoenberg, Webern, Berg, Stravinsky, Wolpe, Messiaen, Takemitsu, Henze, Berio, Wuorinen, Goehr, Knussen, and Lieberson, among others, to audiences around the world. He has performed many important world premiers, in particular numerous works by Toru Takemitsu, Peter Lieberson, Oliver Knussen, and Alexander Goehr, all of which were written for him. Most recently, he played the world premiers of Charles Wuorinen's Piano Concerto no. 4 with the Boston Symphony under the baton of James Levine in Boston, at Carnegie Hall, and at Tanglewood; a solo work by Elliot Carter commissioned by Carnegie Hall and the Gilmore International Keyboard Festival; and another work by Charles Wuorinen for piano and orchestra with the Orchestra of St. Luke's, also commissioned by Carnegie Hall.

Highlights of Peter Serkin's recent and upcoming concert appearances include performances with the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia and Minnesota Orchestras, and the Boston, San Francisco, Detroit, St. Louis, Toronto, and Atlanta symphonies; recitals in Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, Orchestra Hall in Chicago, and New York's 92nd Street Y; performances with the original members of Tashi in Boston, Portland, Princeton, and Town Hall in New York City; and summer festival appearances at Ravinia, Aspen, Ojai, Caramoor, Tanglewood, Blossom, Saratoga, and the Mann Center with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Internationally, he returned to Japan in September 2007 to play recitals featuring the works of Toru Takemitsu and Bach in honor of the 10th anniversary of Takemitsu's death. During the 2007–8 season he appears with the Berlin Philharmonic, Deutsches Symphonie Orchestra, and the Bamberg Symphony.

Peter Serkin's recordings also reflect his distinctive musical vision. The Ocean That Has No West and No East, released by Koch Records in 2000, features compositions by Webern, Wolpe, Messiaen, Takemitsu, Knussen, Lieberson, and Wuorinen. That same year, BMG released his recording of three Beethoven sonatas. Additional recordings include the Brahms violin sonatas with Pamela Frank, Dvořák's Piano Quintet with the Orion String Quartet, quintets by Henze and Brahms with the Guarneri String Quartet, the Bach double and triple concerti with Andras Schiff, and Bruno Canino and Takemitsu's Quotation of Dream with Oliver Knussen and the London Sinfonietta. His most recent recording is the complete works for solo piano by Arnold Schoenberg for Arcana.

Peter Serkin's recording of the six Mozart concerti, composed in 1784, with Alexander Schneider and the English Chamber Orchestra was nominated for a Grammy and received the prestigious Deutsche Schallplatten as well as best recording of the year by Stereo Review magazine. Other Grammy-nominated recordings include Olivier Messiaen's Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jesus and Quartet for the End of Time on BMG and a solo recording of works by Stravinsky, Wolpe, and Lieberson for New World Records.

In May 2001, Peter Serkin was the recipient of an honorary doctoral degree from the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. He was also the first pianist to receive the Premio Internazionale Musicale Chigiana in recognition of his outstanding artistic achievement. He resides in Massachusetts with his wife, Regina, and is the father of five children.
Peter Serkin  PIANO

Ave Christe

Josquin des Prez
(ca. 1450–1521)
Arranged by Charles Wuorinen

Petites esquisses d’oiseaux (1985)

I. Le Rouge gorge
II. Le Merle noir
III. Le Rouge gorge
IV. La Grive musicienne
V. Le Rouge gorge
VI. L’Alouette des champs

Olivier Messiaen
(1908–1992)

Thema mit Variationen. Klavierfassung des Variationensatzes
aus dem Streichsextett, op. 18

Johannes Brahms
(1833–1897)

Capriccio sopra la lontananza del suo fratello dilettissimo, BWV 992

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)

ARIoso. Ist eine Schmeichelung der Freunde, um denselben von seiner Reise abzuhalten
Andante. Ist eine Vorstellung unterschiedlicher Casuum, die ihm in der Fremde könnt nach vorfallen
Adagissimo. Ist ein allgemeines Lamento der Freunde
Aria Introduction. Alhier kommen die Freunde, weil sie doch sehen, dass es anders nicht sein kann, und nehmen Abschied
Adagio poco. Aria di postiglione
Fuga all’imitazione della cornetta di postiglione

Intermission

Variationen und Fuge über ein Thema von Händel, op. 24

Johannes Brahms

Peter Serkin has recorded for Arcana, BMG Classics/RCA Seal, Boston Records, Bridge, CBS Masterworks, Decca, Deutsche Grammophon, ECM, Koch Classics, New World Records, Pro Arte, Telarc, and Vanguard Classics.

Peter Serkin appears by arrangement with C/M Artists New York.
THE RACHEL S. THALER CONCERT PIANIST SERIES
was established at Ithaca College in 1991 in honor of Rachel Thaler.

A native Ithacan and talented pianist, Rachel Thaler attended the Ithaca public schools and graduated from Ithaca High School. She was awarded a scholarship to attend the Ithaca Conservatory of Music, but her father's unexpected death shortly before classes began required her to change her plan and step in to manage the family's furniture business instead.

Although she was never able to formally pursue her studies at the conservatory, Mrs. Thaler saw to it that her two sons and six grandchildren all had the opportunity to play musical instruments. Her love of music remained strong, as did her attachment to Ithaca College. Both she and her husband, Louis K. Thaler, were devoted supporters of the Friends of Ithaca College and members of the Tower Club for many years.

In addition to her musical skill, Rachel Thaler was a talented artist. She worked with needle painting, an ancient Chinese technique that uses pieces of colored thread rather than paint to create the image. Her work has been exhibited at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and in Rochester and Syracuse, and her technique has been featured in a video produced by the New York State Council on the Arts. Mrs. Thaler died on August 18, 2004, at the age of 97.

In endowing the concert series in 1991, Manley H. Thaler said, "My mother has always had an affinity for music. We wanted to do something in her honor during her lifetime. Because of her interest in Ithaca College and its outstanding music program, it was clear that the endowment fund should be created here."

The legacy of the Thalers' love of music lives on today through the Rachel S. Thaler Concert Pianist Series and the Louis K. Thaler Concert Violinist Series, which was established in 2002. The Thaler/Howell Foundation, through the efforts of Manley H. Thaler, endowed both series to recognize and honor Rachel and Louis Thaler and to ensure that outstanding pianists and violinists would always perform for the Ithaca College community and the residents of the surrounding area.