

FACULTY RECITAL

THE FISCHER DUO

NORMAN FISCHER, cello

JEANNE KIERMAN, piano

Friday, October 13, 2000

8:00 p.m.

Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

Celebrating 25 years

THE SHEPHERD SCHOOL OF MUSIC RICE UNIVERSITY

1975-2000

PROGRAM

Fantasiestücke, Op. 73 (1849)

Zart und mit Ausdruck

Lebhaft, leicht

Rasch und mit Feuer

Robert Schumann

(1810-1856)

An Orbicle of Jasp (1999)

Charles Wuorinen

(b. 1938)

Prelude for Cello and Piano

(after the ***Cello Concerto***) (1992)

John Harbison

(b. 1938)

Don Quichotte à Dulcinée (1932)

(transcribed for cello and piano

by Norman Fischer)

Chanson romanesque

Chanson épique

Chanson à boire

Maurice Ravel

(1875-1937)

INTERMISSION

Sonata in D Major, Op. 78 (1879)

Vivace ma non troppo

Adagio

Allegro molto moderato

Johannes Brahms

(1833-1897)

In consideration of the performers and members of the audience, please check audible paging devices with the ushers and silence audible timepieces. The taking of photographs and use of recording equipment are prohibited.

PROGRAM NOTES

*Of all the works on tonight's concert, only the one by Wuorinen was originally written for the combination of instruments heard tonight. The hauntingly beautiful Schumann **Fantasy Pieces** were written while Schumann was staying at a cottage in Kreischa escaping the revolutionary activity in Dresden. It is remarkable to think of his writing music of such reverie and joy without a piano and with the distant sound of gunfire in his ears. During 1849 he wrote to his musician friend Ferdinand Hiller, "I have been very busy all this time... It is just as if outward storms drove one more into oneself, for only in my work do I find any compensation for the terrible storm which burst upon me from without."*

*The Wuorinen work on tonight's concert was originally written as a gift to Fred Sherry, a close personal friend of the composer and champion of his work. They are both avid readers and particular fans of Vladimir Nabokov and, in particular his book **Palefire**. The book is an epic poem and commentary that speaks with unusual eloquence and cleverness. The title comes from a line in Canto Three of the poem, and here is a short excerpt to demonstrate the style of the language. It adds much to experiencing the sounds of the work by Wuorinen:*

*While snubbing gods, including the big G,
Iph borrowed some peripheral debris
From mystic visions; and it offered tips
(The amber spectacles for life's eclipse)—
How not to panic when you're made a ghost:
Sidle and slide, choose a smooth surd, and coast,
Meet solid bodies and glissade right through,
Or let a person circulate through you.
How to locate in blackness, with a gasp,
Terra the Fair, an orbicle of jasp.*

One of the projects of The Fischer Duo during the last year has been finding and recording music written for our medium by American composers born in 1938. Works by Bolcom, Corigliano, Milburn, and Tower have been recorded, and the work by Wuorinen on tonight's concert will be included. In addition, one of the notable composers in this unusual group is John Harbison, who sadly has no music for cello and piano. When we phoned him and talked about a work that we might adapt for this medium to include on our recording, he suggested that we play the first movement of his cello concerto written for Yo-Yo Ma and the Boston Symphony. It needed some help, since the piano reduction of the score did not clearly emulate the non-pitched percussion of the opening. With some revisions and inspiration between composer and performers, you will hear the first public reading of this version. Harbison writes, "The first mysterious gong-like theme is filled out by the

cellist's wide ranging melody. The answering entrance of the full piano is a sonorous enlargement of the opening sounds. In a quick, gliding motion, the cellist, coupled with doubling in the piano, explores the more elusive side of the music's character, moving between two harmonic poles of attraction — a modal E and a cadential mantra C-sharp - F-sharp. Eventually the initial pulse returns and the first solo melody is harmonized and completed."

The desire to perform Ravel's *Don Quichotte* songs happened when I fell in love with them after hearing one of my undergraduate colleagues perform them at Oberlin. I finally got up the nerve to do a transcription and was so happy with the way that it sounded on cello that we made it a regular part of our repertoire and recorded it on an all-French compact disc we made during the 1980s (entitled *Imaginées*). The songs were originally intended for a film about *Don Quixote* and were to be sung by the great Russian basso Feodor Chaliapin. The director, however, did not like the songs and included a set written by Ravel's younger colleague Jacques Ibert. These songs were to be the last completed works by Ravel, who was overcome by the progressively incapacitating illness, Wernicke's aphasia. In these three songs, the knight of the woeful countenance sings to Dulcinea. The first is romantic with Spanish-tinted rhythms, the second is an epic song in the 5/4 meter typical of a Basque poetic genre, and the third is a drinking song in the style of an Aragonese jota.

This version in D major of the familiar Brahms *Violin Sonata in G Major, Op. 78*, was published during Brahms' lifetime and later went out of print. The work came to our attention in 1974 when Janos Starker "discovered" the transcription in a German library and declared it to be by Brahms himself, since there was much reorchestration and, indeed, some reconfiguring of materials in the last movement. Some scholars believe that it was probably a transcription by Julius Klengel, a noted cellist/composer in Berlin. Nevertheless, it is a work that strongly "speaks" through the cello with its powerful lyricism and poignantly personal music. It is music that probes the sublime and touches the heart.

— Notes by Norman Fischer

BIOGRAPHIES

The 2000-2001 season marks the 29th year of THE FISCHER DUO, and the group continues to explore the rich repertoire for cello and piano. The Washington Post has described the Fischer Duo's all-French programming as "intense and totally committed, with a solid understanding of the subtleties of the French style"; The New York Times has commented on "a real sense of dialogue in this duo's ensemble" as well as "a salon-like intimacy and warmth"; and The Boston Globe has heralded Norman Fischer's "boldly imaginative and technically assured skills" and Jeanne Kierman as "equally impressive." In addition to featuring works by the masters, the Fischer Duo has become known for their thematic approach to programming, have performed neglected pieces by composers such as Franz Liszt, Victor Herbert, Nadia Boulanger, and Ferruccio Busoni, and have commissioned new works by many American composers. This month Gasparo Records will issue the duo's latest compact disc featuring works they have commissioned from Pierre Jalbert, Samuel Jones, George Rochberg, and Augusta Read Thomas. Their performance of Richard Lavenda's **Memory's Motion** is featured on the recent compact disc of works by Shepherd School faculty composers. The Fischer Duo's compact disc of French masters on the Northeastern label (NR 238-CD) has received rave reviews. Selected as Artistic Ambassadors for the United States Information Agency, the Fischer Duo completed tours of South America in 1996 and South Africa in 1997.

NORMAN FISCHER is one of this country's most versatile cellists. After completing instrumental study with Richard Kapuscinski, Claus Adam, and Bernard Greenhouse, he first graced the international concert stage as cellist with the Concord String Quartet, a group that won the Naumburg Chamber Music Award, an Emmy and several Grammy nominations, and recorded over forty works on RCA Red Seal, Vox, Nonesuch, Turnabout, and CRI. The New York Times recently said, "During its sixteen years, the supervirtuosic Concord String Quartet championed contemporary work while staying rooted in the Western tradition." "In addition to performing the major concerti, Mr. Fischer has premiered and recorded many new scores for cello and orchestra. Recitals of unaccompanied cello works have received rave reviews such as "Inspiring" (The New York Times) for his New York debut recital of the complete Bach Suites in one evening, and "Coruscating" (Boston Globe) for his performance of Golijov's **Omaramor** at the opening of the 1998 Tanglewood Festival. His chamber music expertise has led to guest appearances with the Juilliard, Cleveland, Emerson, Blair, Schoenberg, Chester, and Audubon string quartets, CONTEXT, Da Camera of Houston, and the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival. He is also a member of the Concord Trio with violinist Andrew Jennings and pianist Jeanne Kierman. A devoted teacher and mentor to younger players, Mr. Fischer has taught at Dartmouth College and the Oberlin Conservatory and is currently Professor of Violoncello at the

Shepherd School of Music. Since 1985 he has taught at the Tanglewood Music Center, summer home of the Boston Symphony, in Lenox, Massachusetts, and currently holds the Barbara LaMont Master Teacher Chair.

JEANNE KIERMAN is a leading advocate of the piano as a collaborative instrument. A graduate of Oberlin, the Dalcroze School, and the New England Conservatory, she studied with master pianists William Masselos, Miles Mauney, Victor Rosenbaum, and Menahem Pressler. Ms. Kierman is equally adroit as a collaborator with voice or instrument and is in great demand as a recital partner. For ten years she was the pianist with the New England-based Alcott Ensemble, performing a broad range of chamber music and developing a virtuosity she frequently demonstrates both on stage, as resident and guest artist with various ensembles, and in the studio with her students. Formerly on the faculty of the Oberlin Conservatory, Ms. Kierman is now Artist Teacher of Piano at the Shepherd School of Music. Ms. Kierman has recorded for Northeastern Records.



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