

FACULTY RECITAL

THE FISCHER DUO

NORMAN FISCHER, cello

*JEANNE KIERMAN, piano
and harpsichord*

with

PAUL ELLISON, double bass

VIVA ITALIA!

Tuesday, March 16, 2004

8:00 p.m.

Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

Ricercata Ottava Giovanni Battista degli Antonii
from Twelve Ricercate (1660-1698)
for Solo Cello (1687)

Sonata No. 6 in B-flat Major Antonio Vivaldi
for Cello and Continuo, RV 46 (1739) (1678-1741)
Preludio: Largo
Allemanda: Allegro
Largo
Corrente: Allegro

Serenata Napoletana, Op. 24 No. 2 (1897) Giovanni Sgambati
(1841-1914)

Sonatina for Cello and Piano (1942) Gian Francesco Malipiero
(1882-1973)

INTERMISSION

La Tempesta for Solo Cello Giovanni Sollima
from Viaggio in Italia (2000) (b. 1962)

Sonata in F-sharp Minor Giuseppe Martucci
for Cello and Piano, Op. 52 (1880) (1856-1909)
Allegro giusto
Scherzo: Allegro molto
Intermezzo: Andantino flebile
Finale: Allegro

The reverberative acoustics of Duncan Recital Hall magnify the slightest sound made by the audience. Your care and courtesy will be appreciated. The taking of photographs and use of recording equipment are prohibited.

PROGRAM NOTES

The idea of doing an all-Italian program for cello and piano has been brewing in my mind for many years. Before I left the Concord Quartet, my brother-in-law Bill Lutes (a former program director for Wisconsin Public Radio) spoke to me about the beauties of much Italian music for cello, especially the wonderful *Sonata* (1921) by Ildebrando Pizzetti. I already had a real love for the string quartets of Gian Francesco Malipiero that was based on an early recording on Nonesuch of the *Rispetti e strambotti* (String Quartet No. 1) from 1920. Then I was looking through a wonderful treatise by the famous French pedagogue Paul Bazelaire entitled "Scientific Instruction in the Violoncello" (1960). He mentions some of the basic repertoire that he taught during that time that included sonatas by Malipiero, Alfano, Casella, and the Pizzetti. Being completely ignorant of these works, I sought to find them and to learn more about non-operatic Italian repertoire.

The program this evening features then a sampling through the ages of music from the seventeenth through the twenty-first centuries. With such a wealth of material to choose from I felt that it was important to include the earliest published work for solo cello, one of the *Ricercate* from Antonii. He was a prominent organist in Bologna, and with his twelve *Ricercate* was one of the first to write for such an unusual medium. The sonatas of Vivaldi are, of course, iconic in the cello repertoire, and the sonata we have chosen for this evening's concert is one of the most beautiful for its harmonic beauty and clever use of motivic invention.

Certainly no one would dispute the hegemony of Italian music during the Renaissance and Baroque periods, but suddenly it seems that we know only operatic repertoire and some liturgical works of Cherubini and orchestral scores of Respighi. Actually, during the Romantic period there were two "giants" that were roughly contemporary with Brahms and Dvořák: Giovanni Sgambati and Giuseppe Martucci. Sgambati was a student of Liszt in Rome, and Liszt pushed his pupil's piano quintets with his own publisher. As one would expect, Sgambati wrote a great deal of piano music, but that is not necessarily the case with the Neopolitan Martucci (some call him "the Italian Brahms"). He was very influential in the resurgence of instrumental music in Italy especially inspiring to the next generation.

On this evening's program the next generation is represented by the work of Malipiero. He, like his contemporaries, was trying to find a way to express his Italian heritage in his music. Inevitably these composers looked to the music of earlier times to find a connection. Malipiero "discovered" the music of Monteverdi in a library and proceeded to produce the first "scholarly" publication of Monteverdi's work. The *Sonatina* on this program is a prime example of the sunshine in his music. (When my daughter Rebecca was in a two-year residency with her string quartet in North Dakota, I sent her the recordings of the Malipiero string quartets for winter-time listening to cure her cabin fever.)

*Giovanni Sollima is one of Italy's great contemporary cellists and composers. He has collaborated with Philip Glass, Robert Wilson, Bang on a Can, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Eliahu Inbal, Jörg Demus, and Martha Argerich, among others. He has been interested in all types of music and has tried to find connections across jazz, rock and improvisational styles. The **Viaggio in Italia** is an extensive work for string quartet and solo cello/singer and was premiered with Sollima and the Lark Quartet at Carnegie Hall. Each of the movements in **Viaggio** is inspired by a great work or artist in Italian culture. Movement No. 10 is "La Tempesta" and is inspired by the famous painting of the same name in the Accademia Museum in Venice by Giorgione (1478-1510). Sollima has had recent success with his popular **Violoncelles, vibrez!** for two cellos and strings recorded recently by Gidon Kremer and Kremerata Baltica for Nonesuch.*

– Notes by Norman Fischer

BIOGRAPHIES

With over thirty years of performing together, THE FISCHER DUO has been widely praised by music critics for its choice of repertoire. Thoroughly versed in the classical repertoire of Brahms, Beethoven, and Schumann, the Fischer Duo has acquired an equally impressive reputation for rediscovering neglected works of the past (Busoni, Boulanger, Foote, and Liszt). They have commissioned many new scores by gifted contemporary composers such as George Rochberg, David Stock, Robert Sirota, Augusta Read Thomas, Richard Lavenda, Pierre Jalbert, Anthony Brandt, Shih-Hui Chen, and Richard Wilson. "One felt like applauding the Fischer Duo before they even played a note for programming rarely-heard cello music by Chopin and Liszt," wrote a reviewer in the The Washington Post. Last October the Fischer Duo launched a new chamber music festival in Vermont with violinist Curtis Macomber.

The Fischer Duo is also known for enlightened residency work. In 1996 the United States Information Agency (USIA) selected the Fischer Duo as Artistic Ambassadors, and they toured South America and the next year toured South Africa receiving the highest ratings for musical maturity and open access to audiences.

The critic from the The Toledo Blade summed up a concert experience with the Fischer Duo: "If there was a prize for Most Elegant Sound by a Chamber Group, the Fischer Duo would surely win it. The two together have a sort of slow-burning combustion on stage that makes for some really exciting and spontaneous music. This is a pair that really knows their repertoire, and more importantly, knows how to absorb an audience into their own musical universe."

The Fischer Duo has performed on public television and National Public Radio. Their compact disc debut, "Imaginées: Music of French Masters," was given Fanfare magazine's highest recommendation: "For fine sound, on top of probing duo teamwork and elegant program-making." This recording will soon be reissued on the Artistic License label. They have two other compact

discs available on the Gasparo label. "American Music in the 1990s" [GSCD-349] includes commissioned works for the duo by George Rochberg, Pierre Jalbert, Samuel Jones, and Augusta Read Thomas. The *Strad* magazine said, "The duo gives thoroughly persuasive performances of all four works, scratching through the surface gesture to get to the heart of the music's expressive potential." Also available on Gasparo is "Robert Sirota: Works for Cello" [GSCD-350] and "Born in America in 1938" [GSCD-351] featuring works by William Bolcom, John Corigliano, Ellsworth Milburn, John Harbison, Joan Tower, and Charles Wuorinen.

NORMAN FISCHER is one of America'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 concertos, 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" (*The Boston Globe*) for his performance of Osvaldo Golijov's *Omaramor* at the opening of the 1998 Tanglewood festival. His chamber music expertise has led to guest appearances with the Audubon, Blair, Cavani, Chester, Chiara, Ciompi, Cleveland, Emerson, Juilliard, Mendelssohn, and Schoenberg string quartets, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Chamber Music International, Chamber Music Ann Arbor, CONTEXT, and Da Camera of Houston.

A devoted teacher and mentor to younger players, Mr. Fischer has taught at Dartmouth College, the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and currently is Professor of Violoncello at the Shepherd School of Music. Since 1985 he has taught at the Tanglewood Music Center, where is now the Coordinator of Strings and Chamber Music.

JEANNE KIERMAN is a leading advocate of the piano as a collaborative instrument. A graduate of Oberlin College, the Dalcroze School, and the New England Conservatory, she studied with master pianists Miles Mauney, Victor Rosenbaum, William Masselos, and Menahem Pressler. Ms. Kierman is equally adroit as a collaborator with voice or instrument and is in great demand as a recital partner. She has performed for Da Camera of Houston, Chamber Music Ann Arbor, Mohawk Trail Concerts, Skaneateles, and the Marrowstone Festival among others. For the last ten summers she has shared her chamber music expertise with students at the Greenwood Music Camp. Formerly on the faculties of Dartmouth College and the Oberlin Conservatory, Ms. Kierman currently serves as Artist Teacher at the Shepherd School of Music.

Co-Principal Bass at the Grand Teton Festival, PAUL ELLISON is Professor of Double Bass and String Department Chair at the Shepherd School of Music. In addition, his diverse international activities include chamber music, period instrument performance, and solo and duo performance, as well as workshops and master classes. Mr. Ellison enjoyed twenty-three years as a member and as Principal Bass of the Houston Symphony Orchestra, several years as Principal Double Bass of the Santa Fe Opera, and seven years as Chair of Strings at the University of Southern California.

Regular performances and master classes throughout North America and Europe include those with CONTEXT and Da Camera of Houston, Strings in the Mountains (Steamboat Springs, Colorado), Aspen, Festival Domaine Forget (Quebec), the Curtis Institute, Yale University, Banff (Canada), the Yehudi Menuhin School (Surrey, England), the Royal College (London), the Royal Northern College (Manchester), the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Festival Flaine de Musique (Flaine, France), New World Symphony, Sarasota (Florida), Southern California Resource for Electro-Acoustic Music (Los Angeles), the Grand Teton Festival, and conventions of the International Society of Bassists in New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Austin, Chicago (Evanston), and Cincinnati, and in England, France, and Germany. Mr. Ellison was in residence at Australia's National Academy of Music in Melbourne as a guest artist and faculty member and recently gave classes and a concert at the Porto (Portugal) Conservatory. He and his wife, oboist Linda Gilbert, frequently share the stage, performing duos written for them. With former students holding prominent positions in orchestras and schools worldwide, Mr. Ellison holds the first Diploma and Teaching Certificate awarded by the Institute Rabbath in Paris and is the past President of the International Society of Bassists.



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