

Albertson College
and
The International Festival for Creative Pianists
present

SERGEY SCHEPKIN, pianist

Friday, April 26, 2002, 7 P.M.

Langroise Recital Hall

Free admission - public invited

Program

Four Preludes & Fugues from WTC I (1722-40) J. S. Bach (1865-1750)

No. 1 in C, BWV 846
No. 2 in C minor, BWV 847
No. 7 in E-flat, BWV 852
No. 8 in E-flat/D-sharp minor, BWV 853

English Suite No. 5 in E minor, BWV 810 (c. 1720) J. S. Bach (1865-1750)

Prélude – Allemande – Courante – Sarabande – Passepied I en Rondeau –
Passepied II – Passepied I da Capo – Gigue

Intermission

Three Preludes from Book I (1909-10): Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

VI . . . Des pas sur la neige (Footsteps in the Snow)
IX . . . La serenade interrompue (The Interrupted Serenade)
X . . . La Cathédrale engloutie (The Sunken Cathedral)

Ballade No. 3 in A-flat, Op. 47 (1841) Frédéric Chopin (1810-49)

Three Preludes: Sergey Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

In C-sharp minor, Op. 3, No. 2 (1892)
In G, Op. 32, No. 5 (1910)
In C minor, Op. 23, No. 7 (1903)

Biography of Sergey Schepkin:

Pianist Sergey Schepkin was hailed by the American Record Guide as "the major Bach interpreter of his generation." The International Piano Quarterly recently selected his recording of the First Book of Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier among the eight best ever made. Schepkin's live and recorded performances of Bach's music have also been praised by such publications as The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Boston Globe, the Los Angeles Times, Fanfare, Gramophone, the BBC Music Magazine, and Piano and Keyboard, among others.

Bach's keyboard works are central to Schepkin's repertoire; however, he performs music of all styles, from late Renaissance to contemporary. He has won numerous prizes and awards, including the First and the Chopin Prizes in the 1999 New Orleans International Piano Competition, the 1994, 1995, and 1999 St. Botolph Club Foundation Grants, the 1999 Ludwig Vogelstein Foundation Award, the 1993 Harvard Musical Association Award, the 1992 Presser Foundation Award, as well as top prizes in the Crown Princess Sonja and All-Russia piano competitions. As recitalist and chamber player, he has performed in many parts of the world, including North America, Europe, Russia, and New Zealand. He has appeared as soloist with The Boston Pops, the St. Petersburg, Oslo, and Louisiana Philharmonics, and the Norwegian Broadcasting Symphony under such conductors as Keith Lockhart and Vassily Sinaisky, among others. He has also been heard on many radio stations in America and abroad and appeared on TV in the USA, Russia, Ireland, and Scandinavia.

Schepkin, who was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, studied piano and composition at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, graduating summa cum laude in 1985. His teachers included Alexandra Zhukovsky and Grigory Sokolov (piano) and Sergey Wolfensohn (composition). He did his graduate assistantship at the St. Petersburg Conservatory in 1987-9. Upon arriving in Boston in 1990, he studied with Russell Sherman at New England Conservatory, where he earned an Artist Diploma in 1992 and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in 1999, and where he currently serves as a professor of music history on the college faculty and as a piano and chamber music instructor on the faculty of the Preparatory School. In 1994-98, Schepkin coached with the late French-American pianist Paul Doguereau. An avid chamber musician, Schepkin has performed with such artists as violinists Nicholas Kitchen and Lucy Stoltzman, violist Marcus Thompson, cellists Colin Carr and Laurence Lesser, flutist Fenwick Smith, soprano Jayne West, and baritone James Maddalena, as well as with the New Zealand and Ciompi string quartets. In 1998-2001, he was active as a founding member and the artistic advisor of the Chameleon Arts Ensemble of Boston. He has commissioned and premiered works by Boston composers Alan Fletcher and Christopher Trapani and won Sofia Gubaidulina's praise for the interpretation of her Chaconne.

Schepkin's recordings of Bach's "Goldberg" Variations, Partitas, and The Well-Tempered Clavier were released by Ongaku Records in 1996-2000; each volume of the Partitas was nominated for the Indie Award respectively in 1997 and 1998. His CD featuring Alfred Schnittke's sonatas for violin and piano, with Joanna Kurkowicz, violin, was recently released by Bridge to high critical acclaim. Schepkin's engagements for the 2001-2 season include recitals and chamber performances throughout the United States.

The following review appeared in the November/December, 2000 issue of Piano & Keyboard magazine:

Sergey Schepkin: Johann Sebastian Bach; The Well-Tempered Clavier II.
Sergey Schepkin, piano. Ongaku Records 024-115, two CD's.

By Arthur Houle

Sergey Schepkin is a rejuvenating antidote to stereotyped Bach. Bach preferred clavichord over harpsichord, advocated cantabile playing, and, late in his life, overcame his earlier objections to the fledgling fortepiano -- he even sold them! Yet conventions fueled by selective historicity or inadequately grounded taste persist. I dislike both sterile "authenticity" and arbitrary emotionalism. I find endless legato and incessant "typewriter pecking" equally tiresome, and obsession with "terraced dynamics" downright exasperating (who sings monotone?!). Wanda Landowska warned against what I call "freeze dried musicology." She wrote: "Can we guess what a...great man of the past would [say] today? No, since we see him...as death left him. But alive he would be [perpetually evolving, surprising us always]." And should we - *can* we - purge ourselves of post-Bach influences? "We...are powerless against [this accumulation, so]...why...rebel? Let us submit...to this transformation of matter." Schepkin embodies Landowska's ideal blend of shameless Romanticism with rigorous intellect. The challenge, he asserts, is to make period practice knowledge "expressive and exciting." Schepkin delivers, breathing joyous life into those dry treatises on your bookshelf. He displays erudite understanding of form, structure and musical rhetoric. But walk a mile in his thought process, and imaginative surprises still await you. Every repeat is tastefully varied, often bubbling with inspired friskiness (e.g., the added ornaments in Prelude XXI, m. 76). Schepkin's rich yet suave lyricism is especially spellbinding in slow numbers (are those bells in the lilting Prelude XI?). Even his slowest playing (e.g., Fugue VIII) conveys an hypnotic sense of line and an unusually warm, glowing timbre, never forced.

This review took inordinately long, for I could not resist jotting Schepkin's myriad ideas into my score - not to necessarily imitate, but rather to hold up as examples of the spirit into which we should enter when playing or teaching Bach. This is reanimated Bach, free from the shackles of typecasting.

Albertson College extends its sincerest appreciation to all those who contributed to the International Festival for Creative Pianists:

- SPECIAL THANKS to **Treasure Valley Music/Yamaha Corporation** for major underwriting of the 2002 festival.
Visit online at <http://www.treasurevalleymusic.com> or call 1-800-376-1286 (Local: 208.376.1055 or 208.376.1286).

A big thanks also to the following:

- **Winther Music** Tel: 1-800-729-5584 (Local: 208.344.5584)
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- **Music Matters** <http://www.music-matters.com>
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Albertson College extends its sincere appreciation to the JR Simplot Company, Pepsi & Caldwell Fine Arts for their generous contributions to the buffet. Also thanks to Phyllis Morey and the buffet committee for their tireless efforts.

Finally, a hearty thanks to Lori Tollman, Coordinating Assistant, and to the many community volunteers who contributed to the success of this festival!

UPCOMING FESTIVAL EVENTS:

Saturday, April 27, 7 P.M. , Langroise Recital Hall, free admission (donations accepted), open to general public:

Judges and Directors Presentations. Scott McBride Smith, Stuart Isacoff, John Salmon, Darryl Schoenborn and Arthur Houle will play and discuss classical and jazz piano selections.

Sunday, April 28, at 7 P.M. , Langroise Recital Hall, free admission (donations accepted), open to general public:

Winners' Recital and Awards Ceremony.

In addition, all student adjudications (Langroise Recital Hall) are open to the public and will run Saturday 9:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. and Sunday from 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. Please enter the hall between performances, not while students are playing.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

The 3rd Annual Albertson College International Festival for Creative Pianists will be held on June 11-14, 2003 (Wednesday through Saturday). We plan to continue having the festival the second week (Wed.-Sat.) of every June thereafter.

Early bird deadline will be 4/1/03; normal deadline will be 5/1/03; and late applicants may (depending on enrollment) be accepted until 6/1/03. We hope to see you again, so please mark your calendars!