4-10-1999

An Evening of Brahms

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

An Evening of Brahms

The Shanghai Quartet
Quartet-in-Residence
Weigang Li, violin
Yi-Wen Jiang, violin
Honggang Li, viola
James Wilson, cello

with
Ruth Laredo, piano

APRIL 10, 1999, 8:00 P.M.
CAMP CONCERT HALL
BOOKER HALL OF MUSIC
GEORGE M. MODLIN CENTER FOR THE ARTS
Piano Quartet in C minor, op. 60
Allegro ma non troppo
Scherzo: Allegro
Andante
Allegro

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Ms. Laredo, Mr. Jiang, Mr. Honggang Li, Mr. Wilson

• • • INTERMISSION • • •

Piano Quartet in A major, op. 26
Allegro non troppo
Poco Adagio
Scherzo: Poco Allegro
Finale: Allegro

Ms. Laredo, Mr. Weigang Li, Mr. Honggang Li, Mr. Wilson
Hailed as “America’s first lady of the piano” (N.Y. Daily News), Ruth Laredo has a distinguished worldwide reputation as a leading soloist, recitalist and recording artist. While she is particularly renowned for her pioneering recordings of the complete solo piano music of Rachmaninoff and the complete piano sonatas of Scriabin, her broad repertoire ranges from Beethoven to Barber.

She has appeared at Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, the Kennedy Center, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Library of Congress and the White House, and with such prestigious orchestras as the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Boston Symphony and the Saint Louis Symphony. She has also performed with the Detroit Symphony, the National Symphony, the American Composers Orchestra, the American Symphony and the principal orchestras of Baltimore, Indianapolis, Houston and Buffalo. Additionally, she has played with the leading chamber orchestras, including the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Orchestra of St. Luke’s and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. Her recent collaborations with Marian McPartland and Dick Hyman in their Three Piano Classical/Jazz Crossover Concerts have been consistently sold out.

Noted for her strong commitment to chamber music, Ms. Laredo frequently collaborates with the Tokyo String Quartet and was a founding member of the Music from Marlboro concerts. She has appeared with the Guarneri Quartet and the Tokyo String Quartet on Lincoln Center’s “Great Performers” series, as well as with the Vermeer, Shanghai, Emerson, Muis and St. Lawrence Quartets.

For the past decade, Ms. Laredo has created a large and enthusiastic following for her ongoing, sold-out series at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She has won high praise for her masterful playing and insightful discussions of Brahms, Chopin, Fauré, Franck, Clara and Robert Schumann, Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky and Dvorak. On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of Ruth Laredo’s Concerts with Commentary in 1997-98, she performed the music of the masters with whom she is most associated, Rachmaninoff, Scriabin and Ravel.

In the fall of 1993, Ms. Laredo made a highly successful tour of the United States as soloist with the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra, culminating in a performance at Carnegie Hall. Prior to the tour, she appeared with the orchestra in Warsaw for a United Nations Day concert that was televised throughout Europe. Her recent tour of Russia and the Ukraine, high-
lighted by the recitals in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Odessa, formed part of an extensive television profile on “CBS Sunday Morning.”

A three-time Grammy award nominee, Ruth Laredo has been widely lauded for her numerous recording projects. She was the first pianist to record Rachmaninoff’s complete solo works, a five-year undertaking for CBS Masterworks which produced seven discs and earned her a “Best Keyboard Artist” award from Record World. The final album in this series won her a Grammy nomination and was chosen “Best of the Month” by Stereo Review. These ground-breaking recordings have been reissued on five compact discs by Sony Classical. Her historic Scriabin recordings – the first in North America of the complete sonatas – have been re-released on two compact discs by Elektra Nonesuch. The charismatic team of Ruth Laredo and James Tocco has recorded Stravinsky’s “The Rite of Spring” for piano four hands and Rachmaninoff’s Suite No. 2 in C Major for Two Pianos, Op. 17 for the Gasparo label. Ms. Laredo’s recordings of the music of Samuel Barber on Nonesuch earned her another Grammy nomination.

In great demand as an eloquent and authoritative commentator on the arts and piano literature, she is a regular columnist for Piano Today magazine, a frequent “guest critic” on WQXR’s long-running “First Hearing” program and a Special Arts Correspondent for National Public Radio’s “Morning Edition.” Additionally, she was commissioned by the international publishing firm of C.F. Peters to edit a new Rachmaninoff Urtext edition. A volume containing the Prelude, Op. 3. No. 2 and the Ten Preludes, Op. 23 inaugurated the series. The second volume, containing the complete Preludes, Op. 32, has also been issued. The Ruth Laredo Becoming a Musician Book, a guide for aspiring pianists drawn from Ms. Laredo’s own experiences is available in bookstores throughout the country.

As one of the pre-eminent woman pianists in the United States, Ruth Laredo is a role model for women in the arts. Nominated for “Woman of the Year” by Ladies Home Journal, she was also a guest speaker at the Second Annual Harvard/Radcliffe Women’s Leadership Conference at the John F. Kennedy School of Government. She was recently chosen to give the commencement day address at Rutgers University’s Mason Gross School of the Arts.

Born in Detroit and now residing in New York City, Ruth Laredo has been playing the piano since early childhood. She studied under Rudolf Serkin at The Curtis Institute and made her New York Philharmonic debut in 1974 under Pierre Boulez. She made her New York recital debut under the auspices of Young Concert Artists, and her New York orchestral debut took place at Carnegie Hall under Leopold Stokowski. In 1984 she was selected as the special guest soloist at the gala Carnegie Hall American Symphony Orchestra concert marking the centennial of Stokowski’s birth. She also has the honor of being one of only five pianists chosen by Carnegie Hall to perform in a concert as part of its 90th anniversary celebration.
The Shanghai Quartet

Since its New York debut at Town Hall in the spring of 1987, the Shanghai Quartet has been hailed by the press and the public alike as one of the leading quartets of its generation. It now performs annually to exceptional critical acclaim in major music centers throughout the United States and abroad.

Formed at the Shanghai Conservatory in 1983, the quartet took second place representing its country at the Portsmouth International Quartet competition. In 1987 the ensemble won the prestigious Chicago Discovery Competition and embarked on an extensive touring career. It has been ensemble-in-residence at the Tanglewood and Ravinia Festivals and has appeared on three occasions at Lincoln Center’s Mostly Mozart Festival.

The quartet has played at Lincoln Center on the “Great Performers” series, in addition to appearing in Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Detroit, Toronto and many other cities. Its annual appearances in New York City have included a sold-out three-concert series with pianist Ruth Laredo at the Metropolitan Museum. The quartet’s other distinguished collaborators include pianists Peter Frankl and Lillian Kallir, guitarist Eliot Fisk, flutist Eugenia Zukerman, violist Arnold Steinhardt and cellist Carter Brey. The ensemble has also made several tours of Europe, giving concerts throughout Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom.

The Shanghai Quartet may be heard on Delos International compact discs. Its 1994 debut release, featuring works of Grieg and Mendelssohn, received exceptional critical acclaim. Recent releases feature quartets by Alan Hovaness and the “Song of the Ch’in” by Chinese composer Zhou Long, as well as works for strings and flute with Eugenia Zukerman. Since 1989, the Shanghai Quartet has been ensemble-in-residence at the University of Richmond.

A native of Shanghai, Weigang Li began violin studies with his parents at age 5 and went on to attend the Shanghai Conservatory at age 14. He came to the United States in 1981 to study at the San Francisco Conservatory. He has been a soloist with the Shanghai Conservatory Orchestra, the Shanghai Symphony, the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the BBC Scottish Symphony. Upon graduating from the Shanghai Conservatory in 1985, he was appointed assistant professor of violin there. Shortly thereafter he left China to continue his education at Northern Illinois University.
From 1987-1989, Mr. Li studied and taught at the Julliard School as teaching assistant to the Julliard Quartet. His other teachers have included Shmuel Ashkenasi, Pierre Menard, Shu-Chen and Isadore Tinkleman.

Born in Beijing, Yi-Wen Jiang began his violin studies with his father at age 6. In 1981 he was accepted into the class of Professor Han Li at the Central Conservatory of Music. In 1985 he came to the United States where his teachers have included Taras Gabora, Jaime Laredo, Michael Tree, Pinchas Zukerman, and Arnold Steinhardt of the Guarneri Quartet. A prize winner at the Mae M. Whitaker and Montreal competitions, he has appeared at many international music festivals. He also appeared with the Central Opera House Orchestra in China, the Victoria Symphony and the Montreal Symphony. Mr. Jiang has performed for NBC and PBS television specials, National Public Radio, CPB in Beijing, WQXR in New York and KFUO in St. Louis. He has recorded for the Record Corporation of China.

Honggang Li began his musical training studying violin with his parents at the same time as his brother, Weigang. When the Beijing Conservatory reopened in 1977 after the Cultural Revo-

ution, Mr. Li was selected to attend from a group of over five hundred applicants. He continued his training at the Shanghai Conservatory and was appointed a faculty member there in 1984. He also has served as a teaching assistant at the Julliard School. Mr. Li has appeared as soloist with the Shanghai Philharmonic and the Shanghai Conservatory Orchestra. In 1987 he won a violin as a special prize given by Elisa Pegreffi of the Quartetto Italiano at the Paolo Borciani competition in Italy. Mr. Li joined the Shanghai Quartet as a violinist and became its violist with the addition of Yiwen Jiang in the summer of 1994.

Ann Arbor, Michigan native James Wilson began cello studies at age 11 and played in his first string quartet at 13. He attended the University of Michigan where, as a student of Jeffrey Solow, he received the Albert A. Stanley Medal, the School of Music’s highest honor. He also studied with Stephen Kates at the Peabody Institute and was twice selected to perform in the prestigious Piatigorsky Seminar for Cellists. Mr. Wilson has appeared as soloist with the Ann Arbor Symphony, recorded for Access Records, and his Duo recitals with pianist Joanne Kong have earned critical acclaim.