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UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC CONCERT SERIES

Felice to Franz

An intermedia piece in two parts
performed by Claudia Stevens,
keyboardist-vocalist-actor

text, music, staging
by Claudia Stevens

This performance by Claudia Stevens is presented by

Music

Modern Foreign Languages

German Studies

Women's Studies

Art

Speech Communication and Theatre Arts

International Studies

Will Program

April 2, 1993, 8:15 PM
North Court Recital Hall

Felice to Franz is a musical monodrama based on the relationship of Felice Bauer and Franz Kafka. The original text is a reconstruction of Felice Bauer's lost letters to Kafka and draws upon Kafka's *Letters to Felice* by permission of Schocken-Pantheon. Claudia Stevens' creative development of this work is supported by a 1992 residency/fellowship at the MacDowell Colony. Presentations of the piece during 1992-93 include: The Peninsula Fine Arts Center, The University of Richmond, Randolph-Macon College, the College of William and Mary, and Kutztown University of Pennsylvania.

PART I: 1912

Letters, September 26 - November 30

setting: Berlin, Felice Bauer's executive office at the firm of Carl Lindstrom, manufacturer of dictating machines

INTERMISSION

PART II: 1913

Letters and a telegram, January 1 - September 19

setting: the same.

PROGRAM NOTE

In 1912 Franz Kafka met Felice Bauer, a career woman visiting from Berlin, at the home of his friend Max Brod in Prague. The meeting was brief and seemingly uneventful; Felice resumed her travels the next day. But Kafka soon initiated a correspondence with Bauer and, over a five-year period, wrote to her an extraordinary body of letters, which have been published as *Letters to Felice*. Although the woman to whom these letters were directed aroused Kafka's intense interest -- he desperately tried to love, and hoped to marry her -- Felice Bauer remains an enigma. Her letters to Kafka have not survived, and it is likely that he destroyed them. Claudia Stevens' reconstruction of thirty letters from Bauer to Kafka and development of her character are built upon evidence -- dates, subject matter and other particulars -- drawn from Kafka's half of the correspondence, as well as on an analysis of Kafka's responses.

Felice Bauer is depicted over the course of a year responding, and composing letters, to her reclusive admirer in Prague. During this time Kafka first proposed marriage, although the pair met only several times, and briefly. In this portrayal, Felice does far more than react to the astonishing campaign of captivation, seduction and manipulation that Kafka carried out almost entirely by means of his letters; she addresses him with an evolving awareness and emotional force irresistible to him until 1917, when his diagnosis with tuberculosis provided him with a pretext to end the relationship.

Kafka's involvement with Felice Bauer had a significant impact on his literary output. Shortly after their first meeting he wrote "The Metamorphosis," his most important story. And, the tumultuous breakdown of their first engagements, presaged by the events depicted in *Part II*, provided the impulse for his novel, *The Trial*. *Felice to Franz* suggests the possibility that Felice's letters also may have influenced several other short stories by Kafka.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Multidisciplinary artist Claudia Stevens creates innovative intermedia pieces for her own performance as pianist-singer-actor. Since 1990 her one-woman performance event PANOPLY has been presented by major universities, including Cornell, The University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, Duke, the University of Cincinnati, George Washington University, and the University of Virginia; by art museums such as the Virginia Beach Center for the Arts, the Everson Museum in Syracuse, and the Chrysler Museum; and by community centers, colleges and alternative spaces in Charleston, Providence, Charlotte, Dayton, Roanoke, Atlanta, and others. Projects conceived and directed by Stevens for her performance have been underwritten by grants from the Virginia Commission for the Arts, the NEA Regional Interdisciplinary Arts Program, by foundations and individuals. In 1992 she received a MacDowell Colony residency/fellowship for development of *Felice to Franz*. Her performances have been televised, both in live simulcast and in 1990, as a full-length PBS Television production by affiliate WCVE. Her recent work, "The Heart Disclosed" was released for national radio broadcast on "NPR Playhouse" in December, 1992. A native of California, Claudia Stevens holds degrees in music from Vassar College, the University of California at Berkeley, and a doctorate in piano performance from Boston University. She studied voice with Catherine Aspinall and composition with Richard Wilson and David DellTredici. Her piano teachers have included Leon Fleisher, Arie Vardi and Leonard Shure. As a solo pianist, Stevens is nationally recognized for contemporary keyboard performance, recently featured in a full-hour segment honoring Aaron Copland on NPR's "Performance Today."

Next: Senior Recital, Ann-Janette McEntire, guitar
April 4, 1993, 3 PM
North Court Recital Hall



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