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Max Levinson

Pianists



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BIOGRAPHY

Pianist Max Levinson is known as an intelligent and sensitive artist with a fearless technique. Levinson's career was launched when he won First Prize at the Guardian Dublin International Piano Competition, the first American to achieve this distinction. He received overwhelming critical acclaim for his two solo recordings on N2K Encoded Music, and was awarded the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant. Most recently, he was awarded the 2005 Andrew Wolf Award for his chamber music playing. The Boston Globe proclaimed: "The questioning, conviction, and feeling in his playing invariably reminds us of the deep reasons why music is important to us, why we listen to it, why we care so much about it".

Max Levinson has performed as soloist with the San Francisco Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Detroit Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, New World Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, Colorado Symphony, Oregon Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Utah Symphony, Boston Pops, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland amongst others. He has worked with such conductors as Robert Spano, Neemi Järvi, Uriel Segal, Joseph Swensen, Jeffrey Kahane, Pinchas Zukerman and Alasdair Neale. Recital appearances include Washington Performing Arts Society's "Kreeger String & Hayes Piano Series" at the Kennedy Center, Tonhalle Orchester Zurich's "Competition Winner Series," Ravinia's "Rising Stars," Lincoln Center's "What Makes it Great" and the FleetBank Boston "Emerging Artists Series."

Artistic Director of the San Juan Chamber Music Festival (in Ouray, Colorado) and former Co-Artistic Director of the Janus 21 Concert Series in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Max Levinson is an active chamber musician. He has collaborated with such renowned artists as the Tokyo Quartet, Vermeer Quartet, Borromeo Quartet, Mendelssohn Quartet, the Jacques Thibaud String Trio, Benita Valente, Richard Stoltzman, Pinchas Zukerman, Joseph Silverstein, Stefan Jackiw, Young Uck Kim, Arnold Steinhardt, David Finckel, Daniel Phillips, Cynthia Phelps, Nathaniel Rosen, Carter Brey, Allison Eldredge, Christopher Nomura, Heiichiro Ohyama, and Marc Neikrug. He has appeared at major music festivals including Mostly Mozart, Santa Fe, Marlboro, Tanglewood, La Jolla, Seattle, Killington, Vancouver and Switzerland's Davos Festival.

Max Levinson's debut recitals at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall and London's Wigmore Hall as the Guardian Competition winner were critical successes and received standing ovations. He performed ambitious programs, which included works by Bartók, Brahms, Chopin, Liszt, Schönberg, Schubert and Kirchner. Of the New York debut performance, The New York Times wrote that Levinson's "quietly eloquent conceptions, formidable technique and lovely touch left little else to be desired."

Max Levinson garnered international accolades for his two recordings. Max Levinson, his debut recording released immediately following his triumph in Dublin, is an extraordinarily thoughtful program that traces the musical lineage between Brahms, Schumann, Schönberg and Kirchner. The Los Angeles Times deemed Mr. Levinson "a brilliant American pianist, musically mature and fully formed technically. More important, he uses his wide spectrum of pianistic mechanics for altogether poetic ends, touching the listener deeply and often." American Record Guide declared Levinson's second disc, *Out of Doors: Piano Music of Béla Bartók* "an important recording and a great one. The disc blew me out of my chair, and it has taken me a long time to get back up. Hearing performances as riveting as these produces a rare frisson; indeed, this is the most brilliant and exciting Bartók piano disc I have heard. On the basis of only two recordings, Mr. Levinson has created the myth of a pianist with everything." He has also recorded the Brahms Horn Trio with the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival for the Stereophile label, and the violin sonatas of Debussy, Janáček, and Prokofiev with violinist Andrew Kohji Taylor for Warner Classics. Upcoming recording projects include the complete piano music of Leon Kirchner, where Levinson's recording will be featured alongside Leon Fleisher, Peter Serkin, and others; the complete piano music of Bruce Sutherland.; and the three Brahms Sonatas for violin and piano with violinist Stefan Jackiw, on the Sony Classics label.

Strongly committed to nurturing young audiences, Max Levinson has been an active participant in the Grammy-in-the-Schools program throughout the United States and is on the faculty of the Boston Conservatory. He was formerly on the faculty of Brown University, served as Artist-in-Residence at Harvard University's Lowell House for four years, and has been featured on National Public Radio's "Performance Today" and "A Note to You." Mr. Levinson serves on the boards of the Aube Tzerko Piano Institute and AMRON (Artists Musicians Recital Opportunity Network). In 2000, he was asked by the Millennium Committee of Ireland to design a National Education Initiative, and gave a televised masterclass as part of the project. He has also taught masterclasses at the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Harvard, MIT, UCLA, Brigham Young University, Rutgers, the University of Washington, Boston University, the Music Teacher's Association of California annual convention and in various cities throughout the U.S. In 1997, he was named "Best Debut Artist" by The Boston Globe and was added to Steinway's distinguished roster of artists. He has also received attention for thought-provoking discussions on his internet blog.

Born in the Netherlands and raised in Los Angeles, Max Levinson began studying piano at age five. His first teachers were Bruce Sutherland and Aube Tzerko, and as a child he also studied cello, composition and conducting. He attended Harvard University, graduating cum laude with a degree in English Literature, and later completed his graduate studies with Patricia Zander at the New England Conservatory of Music, receiving an Artist Diploma and the Gunther Schuller Medal, an award given to the school's top graduate student. Max Levinson currently lives in the Boston area with his wife, cellist Allison Eldredge and their two daughters, Natalie and Jessica.

Critical Acclaim

“The questioning, conviction and feeling in his playing invariably reminds us of the deep reasons why music is important to us, why we listen to it, why we care so much about it.”

- THE BOSTON GLOBE

“He is an American pianist on a threshold, a versatile force at the keyboard. Extravagantly gifted and extraordinarily accomplished, Levinson can compete on the highest level of international keyboard trials. He has fingers, power, brains and intuition.”

- THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

“The pianist’s quietly eloquent conceptions, formidable technique and lovely touch left little else to be desired.”

- THE NEW YORK TIMES

“This disc blew me out of my chair and it has taken me a long time to get back up. Hearing performance as riveting as these produces a rare frisson; this is the most brilliant and exciting Bartok piano disc I have heard. On the basis of only two recordings, Levinson has created the myth of a pianist with everything.”

- AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE

“This brilliant young American pianist, musically mature and fully formed technically uses a wide spectrum of pianistic mechanics for altogether poetic ends, touching the listener deeply and often.”

- THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

“Max Levinson is a master in the making. This young American offers playing of supreme sensitivity and intelligence, beauty of tone and fantasy.”

- BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

“A new voice in the piano world, Levinson demonstrates playing of assurance and maturity, of discriminating and perceptive poetry.”

- GRAMOPHONE MAGAZINE

“The fine young pianist Max Levinson made an eloquent case for this seldom-performed concerto [Mendelssohn #1] Friday night with the Utah Symphony. Levinson's technically secure, yet light touch made the music sparkle. Most memorable was the slow movement, which Levinson turned into 7 minutes of pure magic with his impeccable phrasing and perfectly controlled pianissimos.”

- SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

“Levinson is a poet of the piano. He keeps the belligerent and tender tendencies in touch with one another, never slathering subtle shades in gaudy primary colors and always allowing the music to sound as complex and elusive as it was written to be.”

- NEW YORK NEWSDAY

“Levinson, the American wunderkind, is a true virtuoso – he makes every phrase, every note, say something”

– THE NEW YORK OBSERVER

“One of the brightest, most intellectually fearless pianists of his generation.”

- SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

“Max Levinson is quite a discovery and his recordings have great bravura and intelligence.”

- SUNDAY TIMES (LONDON)

“You can hear gasps in the audience – Max Levinson displays technical wizardry. His playing has solid, assured technique, clarity of vision and a sense of the permanent values in music that underlie surface variations.”
- THE WASHINGTON POST

“Levinson combines both the world class technical armory with a highly developed poetic sensibility.”
- THE BOSTON HERALD

Concerto Repertoire

Mozart	Concerto in G major, K. 453 Concerto in D minor, K. 466 Concerto in C major, K. 467 Concerto in A major, K. 488 Concerto in C minor, K. 491 Concerto for Two Pianos in E-flat major, K. 365
Beethoven	Concerto #1 in C major Concerto #2 in B-flat major Concerto #3 in C minor Concerto #4 in G major Concerto #5 in E-flat major “Triple” Concerto in C major
Mendelssohn	Concerto #1 in G minor
Chopin	Concerto #1 in E minor Concerto #2 in F minor
Schumann	Concerto in A minor
Liszt	Concerto #1 in E-flat major
Brahms	Concerto #1 in D minor
Tchaikovsky	Concerto #1 in B-flat minor
Rachmaninoff	Concerto #2 in C minor
Ravel	Concerto in G major Concerto for Left Hand
Bartok	Concerto #2 Concerto #3
Shostakovich	Concerto #1
Gershwin	Rhapsody in Blue
Barber	Concerto
Bernstein	“The Age of Anxiety” for Piano and Orchestra
Berio	“Points on the Curve to Find” for Piano and Orchestra

Recital Programs

Max Levinson Recital Programs Offered 2009-11

All-Schumann Program (Schumann 200th birth anniversary is 2010)

Kinderszenen (Scenes from Childhood)

Kreisleriana

Dauidsbundlertanze

Music from 1911 (offered for year 2011)

Rachmaninov Four Etudes Tableaux, op. 33

Ravel Valses Nobles et Sentimentales

Granados "The Maiden and the Nightengale" from "Goyescas"

Stravinsky Three Movements from "Petrouchka"

Schoenberg Six Little Piano Pieces, op. 19

Bartok Allegro barbaro

Russian Visions

Rachmaninoff Three Etudes Tableaux, op. 33

Prokofiev Visions Fugitives (selections)

Tchaikovsky-Pletnev "Nutcracker" Suite

Mussorgsky "Pictures at an Exhibition"

Dance Music

Bach French Suite in G major

Ravel Valses Nobles et Sentimentales

Tchaikovsky-Pletnev "Nutcracker" Suite

Schumann Dauidsbundlertanze