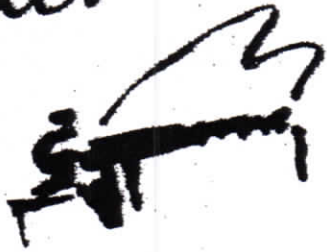


Michael Sellers



Pianist, **MICHAEL SELLERS'** annual tours have taken him to most European countries, Russia, South America, throughout the United States and Asia, and have included concerts in some of the most important halls such as Edinburgh's Queen's Hall, London's Wigmore Hall and Vienna's Musikverein. These tours have resulted in enthusiastic audiences, and re-engagements.

He has presented premiers of many new works, among them, "Touches" by Leonard Bernstein and has recorded for Orion Records under the auspices of the Yehudi Menuhin Foundation. He received a "Recording of Special Merit" accolade awarded by Stereo Review. He has recorded widely for radio in Europe and the U.S. and several of Mr. Sellers' concerts were filmed for television in Poland and Russia. High points of recent tours have been a recital in the Liszt Muzeum, where Mr. Sellers played in Liszt's private concert hall immediately adjacent to the composer's last apartment in Budapest, and a private concert at Zelazowa Wola in the home where Chopin was born, a few feet away from his birth site. "

Recently, he completed a successful fifty concert world tour on four continents. He has been invited to go back to Russia to play in the prestigious Philharmonic Hall in St. Petersburg. In November, 2016 he completed his 33rd European tour with recitals in France, England and Holland. The previous season he had a most successful tour in Europe, the highlight of which was an all-Chopin recital in Warsaw's Szustra Palace for which he received a standing ovation. He has given master classes in Italy, Poland, the US, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Mr. Sellers is the Founder of The William Kapell Piano Foundation for Contemporary Music and Musicians and served as Executive Director for over 28 years. The foundation commissioned composers to write new works for the piano. Mr. Sellers is a designated Steinway Concert Artist and recently released his CD "Live from San Francisco" (now available on Whisper Films label). He also maintains an active private teaching studio in Los Angeles.

Michael Sellers



Photo by Walt Mancini

“At home throughout the world”

SAARBRUCKEN: *Saarbrucker Zeitung*

“A GREAT PIANIST . . . PLAYING IN A GRAND STYLE (AND) WITH PLENTY OF CHARACTER”

BRUSSELS: *Cosyns Verhaeghen (Brussels News)*

“CLEARLY A VIRTUOSO”

FRANKFURT: *Allgemeine Zeitung*

“RARE INSIGHT, EASE, AND STRIKING INTENSITY”

EDINBURGH: *Evening News*

“CREATED AN IMMENSE IMPRESSION”

GENEVA: *Le Nouvel Humaniste*

“A pianist of great personality and wide-ranging technique, with great powers of interpretation”

MALTA: *Malta Times*

Inside the mind of a concert pianist

Michael Sellers, who is scheduled to perform today in Irvine, tells us what it's like to be in his shoes.

By MICHAEL RYDZYNSKI
FOR IRVINE WORLD NEWS

Michael Sellers is an in-demand pianist who makes his Irvine debut this afternoon in the Irvine Classical Music Series.

Among other songs, he will perform two of Mendelssohn's "Songs Without Words"; Liszt's transcription of a Schumann song, "Widmung,"; two original works by Liszt; and four by Chopin.

Sellers earned a bachelor's degree from Northwestern University and a master's degree in music from the Manhattan School of Music. The Chicago native now lives in Los Angeles, where he studied with Aube Tzerko, pupil of and assistant to the legendary Artur Schnabel. He also studied with Nina Scolnik, who teaches piano at UC Irvine. Here, he gives us some insight into the very busy life of a pianist and teacher.

Q: How do you decide what you will perform in a recital?

A: First, the repertoire I happen to be playing at the time. Then, it's the venue: I heard a concert once (at Irvine Presbyterian) and so I heard the acoustics there and the piano they have, a wonderful nine-foot Steinway grand. And then there's the audience: I get the feeling they are a bit conservative. So I really like this good mixture of composers and compositions I made, as



MICHAEL SELLERS

all have a certain ethos and lyrical Romantic spirit in common. I'm after what I feel would work at that venue for that kind of audience. For example, I don't feel Schoenberg would be suitable for them. But this program is. It's especially communicative and speaks to the heart. And all are beautiful and special compositions.

Q: How do you get booked for concerts, such as this one?

A: M'lou Dietzer (co-manager of the series) called me and invited me to play. I had played for her two years ago, when this series was at another location (Orange Coast Unitarian Universalist Church). She had called me then to substitute for a pianist who had fallen ill on only 24 hours notice, but it worked out just fine with me.

So she remembered me and called this time to ask if I wanted to play on her series in Irvine.

A number of my concerts come about this way, with direct calls. Others through management, still others I ask for if I like a venue.

Q: Where do you perform?

A: I've played throughout the U.S., both in western and eastern European countries and, a couple of summers ago, in South America, as part of the International Cello Festival in Rio de Janeiro. I've played in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Some of my performances are single dates, some are part of a festival, some are part of a series. Some are solos, some chamber music, others with orchestra. This season, I'll give 60 (performances) in all, which is typical for me, and include New York City last October, my 22nd European tour last November and, after Irvine, San Francisco.

Q: In addition to your performing career, you also teach. How do you manage to juggle these two careers?

A: (He's been teaching at Mount St. Mary's College and Southern California Conservatory of Music the past eight years.) It's very tricky. It's not an easy thing to do both. I'm gone for two or three weeks at a time, but sometimes it's been for up to two months. I have

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Who: Pianist Michael Sellers

What: Performs during the Irvine Chamber Music Series

When: Today at 2 p.m.

Where: Irvine Presbyterian Church, 4445 Alton Pkwy. at Meadowbrook in Woodbridge.

Cost: \$10 (advance), \$12 (door) general; \$7-\$8 students, \$25-\$30 family, \$5 each for groups of 10 or more (advance or door).

Information: (949) 733-1383

about 30 students at both schools and my private studio and they wait for me until I return. Yet it hasn't created a problem: I do make up for missed lessons and manage to stay on top of their progress. And they participate regularly in competitions and take rigorous examinations that are given throughout North America - such as from the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto - and they do well with both, winning medals.

Q: Have you had a student who has gone on to international fame?

A: Yes, so far, one former student, Joan Kwuon - but, ironically enough, on the violin, which she studied concurrently.

After nine years studying the piano with me, she decided on the violin as her primary instrument, and has played with such orchestras as the Boston Symphony under Andre Previn. She has a concert this month at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (in New York) that's billed "Joan at the Met." I'm really proud of her.