

## Mendelssohn Piano Trio

“The Mendelssohn Trio's performance emphasized, in turn, portentousness, sophistication and playfulness.”

Joan Reinthaler, *Washington Post*, March 23, 2009

“These performances are splendid in everyway, and the recording is equally fine.

I can't imagine a better introduction to this long-neglected music.”

Review of Goldmark Piano Trios CD (Centaur Record), George Chien, *Fanfare Magazine*, September/October 2005

For the past 15 years Mendelssohn Piano Trio has been thrilling audiences in the US and abroad, performing with that rare combination of powerful individual talent and tight-knit collaboration that is the hallmark of a truly exceptional chamber music ensemble. The Mendelssohn Piano Trio's extensive repertoire embraces works from all periods of the genre's history. Ensemble members are superb soloists in their own right, having enjoyed diversified musical careers that transcend international boundaries and range from solo appearances with various orchestras to chamber music collaborations with such artists as Earl Carlyss, Ann Schein, Ronald Leonard, Igor Zhukov, Natalia Gutman, as well as many other musicians of the international stature.

Currently Ensemble-in-Residence for Washington DC's Embassy Series, Messiah College as well as “Chamber Music in Grantham” summer festival, the Mendelssohn Piano Trio is one of the most exciting ensembles on the national and international music scene. Pianist, Ya-Ting Chang is from Taiwan; violinist, Peter Sirotin is from Russia; and cellist, Fiona Thompson is from England. The *Washington Post* has described the group's Brahms cycle of piano trios and piano quartets presented by the Embassy Series as “unfathomably beautiful”, “transcendent” and “electrifying”. The group has also presented a cycle of complete Beethoven piano trios in Portugal and Washington DC to critical acclaim. The trio has recently signed a five-year contract with *Centaur Records Inc.* to record a cycle of complete Haydn Piano Trios. The *American Record Guide*, *Fanfare Magazine* and others have praised the trio's many recordings released on Centaur Records. Numerous classical music stations in the United States have also featured these recordings as well as CDs that the group recorded abroad. The trio's performance at the National Concert Hall in Taipei, Taiwan was recorded for the Taiwanese classical music TV channel and their concert at the National Gallery of Arts was broadcasted on NPR's “Performance Today” program.

### PETER SIROTIN

Since his debut at the age of 14, performing Paganini Concerto No. 1 with Kharkiv philharmonic in his native Ukraine, violinist **Peter Sirotin** has performed hundreds of concerts as a chamber musician, soloist and concertmaster in Europe, North America and Asia. After graduating with honors from Moscow's Central Music School Mr. Sirotin became the youngest member of the "Moscow Soloists" chamber ensemble. With this group he has toured extensively, performing in the major music centers such as Royal Albert Hall in London, Pleyel Hall in Paris, Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and Beethoven Hall in Bonn among others.

Mr. Sirotin studied in Moscow Conservatory and Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins University, where he has received a full scholarship for a Graduate performance diploma in violin performance and the first Graduate performance diploma in chamber music awarded in the history of that school. His teachers include Earl Carlyss, Victor Danchenko, Berl Senofsky and Adolf Leschinsky (pupil of Carl Flesch).

Mr. Sirotin's performances as a concertmaster include a wide range of projects from concerts in Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center and Verizon Hall with Arlo Guthrie to performances with the Cathedral Choral Society in National Cathedral in Washington DC. He is currently an Associate concertmaster of the Harrisburg Symphony in PA.

An active educator, Mr. Sirotin is currently artist-in-residence at Messiah College in Grantham PA, where he has co-founded a summer chamber music and composition program for young musicians. He has given masterclasses in US and abroad and has served as an adjudicator in competitions.

In 1997 Mr. Sirotin has founded with his wife, pianist Ya-Ting Chang the Mendelssohn Piano Trio. Mr. Sirotin has collaborated in performance with pianists Ann Schein, Igor Zhukov, Alexei Lubimov, violinist Earl Carlyss (former Juilliard String Quartet member), cellist Natalia Gutman, flutist Claudio Arrimani and other great performers. His performances have been described by critics as "stylistically refined", "electrifying" and "brilliant". Recently, Mr. Sirotin together with his wife, Ya-Ting Chang has appeared as a soloist in the world premiere of Ching-Ju Shih double concerto for violin, piano and orchestra at the National Concert Hall in Taipei, Taiwan. Beginning on July 1 2011, Mr. Sirotin is going to serve as the Artistic Director of the Market Square Concerts in Harrisburg PA.

## **FIONA THOMPSON**

As cellist of the Mendelssohn Piano Trio, **Fiona Thompson** has become known among devoted audiences for what one Washington Post critic has described as her "eloquent", "radiant" and "unfailingly handsome" sound. She began her cello studies at the age of seven in her native England, and over a musical career that spans nearly twenty years, she has performed across the US, Europe and Asia.

In addition to the Mendelssohn Piano trio, Fiona's Chamber music experience also includes performances with the Melos Ensemble, the Cygnus Chamber Ensemble and the Rasumovsky Quartet. She has played with a number prominent chamber musicians, including violinist Earl Carlyss, pianist Ann Schien, clarinetist Gervaise de Peyer, pianist Stanley Babin, bandoneonist Raul Jaurena and pianist and conductor Stuart Malina.

Much of Fiona's career success can be attributed to her education. She began at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester, England, and then she attended the Royal Northern College of Music, a well-known performance institution also in Manchester. In 1994 she graduated from the Royal Northern with honors and was accepted to the University of Southern California (USC) Thornton School of Music on a full scholarship. She has studied with many fine teachers, including Elizabeth Wilson, Gillian Thoday, Moray Welsh, Leonid Gorokov and Ronald Leonard.

As a soloist, Fiona Thompson has performed with the Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra, Westwood Chamber Orchestra and the Bakersfield Symphony. As an orchestral musician, Fiona is active with a number of well-known groups. She has played with Baltimore Symphony Orchestra as well as the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra, including the opera's 2002 tour in Japan. She is principal cellist with the Harrisburg Symphony orchestra, where she has been a member since 1998. She has also played with the Metropolitan Orchestra, as principal cellist on its Arlo Guthrie tour at Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall.

Fiona's background and performance experience has also contributed to her role as a music educator. She has given master classes in the US and abroad, and she is currently a teacher and Artist in Residence at Messiah College in Pennsylvania. She is also a frequent judge for competitions.

Ms. Thompson plays on a cello by Paolo Testore, circa 1750.

## **YA-TING CHANG**

**Ya-Ting Chang**, graduated from the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University with BM and MM in piano performance. She is a member of piano faculty at Messiah College in Grantham, PA and was on the faculty at Columbia Union College in Takoma Park, Maryland. Ms. Chang is the pianist of the Mendelssohn Piano Trio, which is an Ensemble-in-residence at the Embassy Series and Messiah College. She has toured in the U.S. and abroad as well as recorded numerous CDs with this group.

Ya-Ting Chang began studying piano at age six. After winning first prize in the 1987 Taiwan National Piano Competition, she came to the United States in 1988 as part of the Taiwanese Government's Gifted Children program. She studied piano with Enrique Graf, and flute with Gail Cameron and Bonnie Lake. Ms. Chang entered the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University as a scholarship student of Ann Schein, a pupil of Arthur Rubinstein, Myra Hess and Mieczyslaw Munz.

Since then, she has performed extensively throughout the United States, Germany, Hong Kong and Taiwan. For three years she participated in the Collaborative Artist Program at the Aspen Summer Festival and performed in the International Piccolo Spoleto Music Festival in Charleston, South Carolina. Ms. Chang appeared as a soloist with Messiah College Orchestra, Gettysburg Chamber Orchestra, Shippensburg University Festival Orchestra as well as Hong Kong Chamber Orchestra. She has given masterclasses and served as an adjudicator in competitions. She is also a very active chamber musician who enjoys making music with performers outside of her piano trio. She has collaborated with many instrumentalists including members of the Razumovsky String Quartet, National Chamber Ensemble, Fessenden Ensemble, principal flutists of Memphis and Harrisburg Symphony Orchestras as well as renowned cellist, Ronald Leonard. *The Washington Post* critics described her recent performances in Washington DC Embassy Series as "impressive" and "eloquent". Recently, Ms. Chang together with her husband, Peter Sirotin has appeared as a soloist in the world premiere of Ching-Ju Shih double concerto for violin, piano and orchestra at the National Concert Hall in Taipei, Taiwan. Beginning on July 1, 2011 Ms. Chang will serve as the Executive Director of the Market Square Concerts in Harrisburg, PA.