



National Philharmonic
The Music Center at Strathmore
5301 Tuckerman Lane
North Bethesda, MD 20852
T 301.493.9283
F 301.493.9284

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Marc Apter,
301-904-3690 marca1030@gmail.com
Deborah Birnbaum
301-493-9283, ext. 118
deborah@nationalphilharmonic.org

Pianist Brian Ganz Continues His Chopin Project In February 2012 at the Music Center at Strathmore

*Pianist continues his “Extreme Chopin” Quest
To Perform All of the Composer’s Works*

North Bethesda, MD, (January 1, 2012) – Less than a year ago, **Pianist Brian Ganz** began his “Extreme Chopin” quest to perform all of Frédéric Chopin’s works. The sold out recital at the Music Center of Strathmore launched Ganz’s ambitious endeavor to perform the approximately 250 works of Chopin over the next decade. The next concert in the series will take place at Strathmore on February 11 at 8 pm. To purchase tickets visit nationalphilharmonic.org or call 301-581-5100.

Ganz will explore the theme of “Dances and Fantasies” in his second Chopin recital at Strathmore. “The program will include such beloved Chopin favorites as the Fantaisie-Impromptu and the ever popular Polonaise in A major,” Ganz said. “The Polonaise-Fantaisie, Op. 61, Chopin’s last large-scale masterworks for solo piano, will form the centerpiece of the program. It’s one of Chopin’s very personal statements, and relatively rarely heard.”

An audience of almost 2,000 attended the January 2011 concert, after which The Washington Post wrote: “Brian Ganz was masterly in his first installment of the complete works.”

The February 2012 program will include Two Polonaises, Op. 40; Fantaisie (“Fantasy”) in F minor, Op. 49; Impromptu No. 2 in F-sharp Major, Op. 36; Fantaisie-Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66 (Posthumous); Waltz in A-flat Major, Op. 42; Polonaise-Fantaisie, Op. 61; Four Mazurkas, Op. 6; Andante Spianato et Grande Polonaise Brillante, Op. 22.

--more--

“Chopin’s music is the language of my soul, and I have dreamed since childhood of someday performing all of his works,” said Ganz, widely regarded as one of the leading pianists of his generation. In an article about the project, the *Baltimore Sun* wrote: “The boy was 11, already well along in his process of discovering music, when he found himself alone at home one day listening to Chopin’s Ballade No. 1 in G Minor, Opus 23. Something in the piece struck Brian Ganz like a bolt from stormy skies.” Ganz recounted that moment, saying, “How can it be so beautiful that it hurts? That was the moment that I like to say Chopin wounded me.”

Since his January 2011 Chopin recital, Ganz has performed the Grieg piano concerto with the National Philharmonic under the direction of Music Director and Conductor Piotr Gajewski and Beethoven’s first concerto with the National Symphony of Costa Rica under the baton of Mykola Diadiura. He has toured northern California with the Palomarin Chamber Music Foundation and played in Italy with the Alba Music Festival. In January, he will make his first appearances in South America as he takes part in the Cartagena Music Festival in Colombia.

In his inaugural Chopin recital, Ganz played several early pieces to showcase Chopin’s initial promise and then played more mature works in the same genres to demonstrate the promise fulfilled. “I like to call this ‘musical gardening,’” Ganz has said. “First the seed of his genius, then the full flowering.” Future recitals will include all the chamber music and songs as well as the complete solo works, including each version of every mazurka and waltz. Ganz will also play such obscure overlooked works as the little Fugue in A minor, the two bourrées and the variation Chopin wrote for Hexameron, a rarely heard work initiated by Chopin’s friend, composer and pianist Franz Liszt, and carried out completed by multiple composers.

Ganz is researching the question of whether every work has ever been performed before by a single pianist in a series. He may be the first to perform all Chopin’s works, but says, “Of course, the important thing is not whether I’m the first to do this. I’m excited to share works with Chopin lovers that they may never have heard before,” Ganz said. “There are so many beloved works of great beauty and emotional power, but there are also quite a few buried treasures that deserve to be heard. It’s fascinating to hear, for example, the different authentic versions that exist of some very well-known works. There are marvelous surprises in store for Chopin lovers.”

Ganz will perform Chopin’s orchestral works with the National Philharmonic, led by Maestro Gajewski, who has embraced the pianist’s ambitious endeavor wholeheartedly. “Brian is likely the first to undertake to perform all the works of Chopin. He is the perfect pianist to play all of Chopin’s works--not only because of his great love for the composer, but also because of his intense connection with his audience,” Gajewski said. “Brian’s playing exudes incredible warmth and openness. He demonstrates an uncommon eagerness to bridge the distance between artist and audience.”

--more--

Ganz's recordings have been released on the Accord label in Paris. He has begun a project with Maestoso Records to record the complete works of Chopin and has also recorded on the Gailly label in Belgium. In addition, he has been named an artist/editor for the Schirmer Performance Editions, which has already published his Chopin Preludes.

"There isn't much about Chopin that Brian Ganz doesn't know," *The Washington Post* has written. "The pianist has explored the nocturnes, the etudes, the sonatas and concertos and the rest in concerts, master classes and recordings for years now. His delight and wonder in this music seems to grow, apparently without bounds, as time goes on."

In January 2010, Ganz visited Poland, invited by the renowned conductor Miroslaw Blaszczyk to play with the Filharmonia Slaska and Filharmonia Pomorska. Visiting Chopin's home country affected Ganz profoundly. "Chopin is Poland's national treasure. His face was pictured everywhere, sometimes with no name under it and no caption of any kind. It is almost as if he is the air people breathe. This was profoundly satisfying to me, because he has always been the air I breathe," Ganz said. "I visited the church where his heart lies in Warsaw. I visited the monument where outside concerts take place under a graceful, sweeping statue of him. I took a taxi to his birthplace in Zelazowa Wola. The whole experience was a pilgrimage for me."

Ganz sometimes brings his entire collection of Chopin's music to a performance so that he can accept requests from the audience. "One of my lifelong goals has been to study every single note Chopin composed," Ganz said. "This project gives me a lovely framework within which to reach that goal." In an exuberant review of a Ganz performance, *The Washington Post* wrote, "One comes away from a recital by pianist Brian Ganz not only exhilarated by the power of the performance but also moved by his search for artistic truth."

Ganz has shared First Grand Prize in the Marguerite Long Jacques Thibaud International Piano Competition and won a silver medal (third prize) in the Queen Elisabeth of Belgium International Competition. He has performed as a soloist with such orchestras as the St. Louis Symphony, the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, the City of London Sinfonia and Paris's L'Orchestre Lamoureux and under the direction of conductors such as Leonard Slatkin and Mstislav Rostropovich.

He is a graduate of the Peabody Conservatory of Music, where he studied with Leon Fleisher. Earlier teachers include Yida Novik and Claire Deene. Gifted as a teacher himself, Ganz is a member of the piano faculty and Artist-in-Residence at St. Mary's College of Maryland. He also serves on the piano faculty of the Peabody Conservatory. He has served on the jury of the Long Thibaud Competition in Paris.

--more--

To purchase tickets to Brian Ganz's all-Chopin concert on **February 11, 2012 at 8pm** at the Music Center at Strathmore, please visit **nationalphilharmonic.org** or call the Strathmore ticket office at **(301) 581-5100**. Tickets are \$24 - \$46; kids 7-17 are FREE through the ALL KIDS, ALL FREE, ALL THE TIME program (sponsored by *The Gazette*). ALL KIDS tickets must be purchased in person or by phone. Parking is free.

Photo Cut Line: The second concert of pianist Brian Ganz's "Extreme Chopin" quest to be the first to perform all the works of Chopin will take place at the Music Center at Strathmore on February 11. (photo credit: Michael Ventura).

###