



Chopin Society of Atlanta

NEWSLETTER

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Upcoming Events:

Chopin Recital
Stanislaw Drzewiecki, piano
March 19, 2006 7:00 pm
Roswell Cultural Arts Center

Annual Fundraising Event
Chopin Society Member
Exclusive
Spring 2006

Chopin's Life & Work
Third Annual Competition
for Atlanta Youth
Fall 2006

Chopin Recital
October 2006
Roswell Cultural Arts Center

2006 Advertising Rates

Advertise your business while supporting the Chopin Society of Atlanta

For concert program advertising rates, contact Mary Montgomery at 770.587.3240 for more information.

Program pages are 5-1/2" by 8-1/2".

Ad submissions are subject to CSA approval.

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Watch for other *Member Only* Events and Ticket Discounts online.

A Good Companion

Interview with John Lemley, radio presenter at WABE Atlanta and host of CSA concerts by Bożena U. Zaremba

Some pessimists envisaged that radio would not stand the competition of visual media like television or video. Success of radio stations like WABE Atlanta proves them wrong. Why?

Radio, if done well, offers companionship that TV doesn't. Somehow it is more intimate. In my own work I have discovered that the best way to communicate with the listener is to think of only one person. That takes a little work in the beginning, because in the announcer's head the first realization is that there are hundreds, thousands of people listening. But if I start thinking of one person and talking to one person, it is not so overwhelming for me, and for the listener it is much more intimate; the listener feels as if I am talking just to him or her, which at the moment I am. Most of all, radio allows listeners to use their imagination more than they can with television. With radio you get to paint your own picture in your head of the subject or the person who is talking to you or with the music.

Exactly. Many people, including myself, are surprised when they meet you in person for the first time. Usually they expect you to be much older. Do you find this amusing?

Absolutely. I've almost had painted in my head (through various comments) exactly what I must look like. Most people assume I am well over middle aged, short, bald, with glasses, wearing perhaps a tie and a sweater. Maybe in twenty or thirty years I will match that image (laughs). I experience the same thing with radio personalities I listen to. It can completely change your perspective.

Is radio in any way threatened?

I think radio, as we know it, may be facing the biggest competition in its existence with satellite radio, which is popping up all over the place. More and more automobile makers are including it in their vehicles and offering the buyer a year's subscription in the beginning, which is enough to get them hooked. Satellite radio is a wonderful thing; with its niche programming it offers a much greater variety than any city's broadcast offerings.

But at the same time it's very limiting...

It is limiting. So we are trying to offer something that satellite radio can't, which is local content and local presence: having announcers that the listener knows are living in the same city, keeping listeners informed of art events that are coming up, presenting interviews with artists who will be appearing in that city that very night, as well as local weather forecasts.

Is "Star Gazing Tips" part of that policy?

Absolutely. "Star Gazing Tips" started really as just a way for me to spice up the weather forecast and was planned as a one- or two-time thing. But due to public demand I incorporated it in my program on daily basis. Since about two years ago it has been funded by the Fernbank Science Center.

You hold a BA in Musical Theatre performance from Birmingham-Southern College. Why didn't you pursue a career in theater?

I came darn close to doing so! From the very earliest moments that I can recall, I always wanted to perform. When I came closer to college age, I felt that musical theater was what



John Lemley Photo: Mim Eisenberg

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CSA presents Stanislaw Drzewiecki in Concert Sunday, March 19

Stanislaw Drzewiecki, a young prodigy from Poland, went on his first concert tour to Japan at the age of six, during which time he played with the Sinfonia Varsovia Orchestra. Since then, he has appeared in many famous concert venues around the world, such as Carnegie Hall (New York), Victoria & Albert Museum (London), Schöönbrunn Palace (Vienna), Palacio de Bellas Artes (Mexico City), Queen Elizabeth Hall (in Vancouver), Chicago Symphony Hall, Gusman Hall (in Miami), and Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall.



Photo: www.sdrzewiecki.com

Mr. Drzewiecki released his first CD

(*Piano Concertos – Bach, Mozart, Beethoven*) at the age of ten. This recording and the next two CDs were nominated for a Fryderyk Award. The fourth CD, on which he played Chopin's *Piano Concerto in E minor* and *12 Etudes* recorded with the Sinfonia Varsovia and Grzegorz Nowak, with Chopin's *Piano Concerto in E minor* and *12 Etudes*, gained the "Golden" status for the number of sold CD's sold. The artist has also been invited to concerts inaugurating such prestigious cultural events as the Chopin Festival in Canada, the Festival de Radio France et de Montpellier, the Denmark Radio Festival in Copenhagen, and the 6th Festival Cultural de Mayo in Guadalajara. In, in 2004 he inaugurated

the concert season with the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra at Sapporo Concert Hall. In February 2005 he performed with the same orchestra in Suntory Hall and Metropolitan Art Space in Tokyo, led by Alexander Lazarev, within the concert series presenting the world's most outstanding conductors.

Mr. Drzewiecki is the laureate of many prestigious awards, including the Grand Prix Award in the European Television Competition in Alicante (1999) and the 10th Eurovision Grand Prix for Young Musicians in Bergen (2000), the final concert of which was viewed by 10 million people.

The Chopin Society of Atlanta will proudly present Mr. Drzewiecki in concert on Sunday, March 19 at 7:00 pm at the Roswell Cultural Arts Center. (Ticket information on page 1.)

Rafał Blechacz Winner of the 15th Frederic Chopin International Piano Competition

This article originally appeared in the Gazeta the official bulletin of the 15th International Chopin Piano Competition

The winner of the 15th Competition is not a man from nowhere. That he is a talent of the purest and noblest kind has been clear for at least 10 years. The most important thing is that he was allowed to develop and mature naturally and in peace and quiet. Credit for this is due largely to his teachers. It is a manifestation of the wisdom and noble modesty of his closest circle: his family, which is not musical but understands his needs and his devotion to music with such delicate sensitivity.

Blechacz, born June 30, 1985, comes from Naklo on the Notec River. He learned to play the piano at a local music group at age five. At age eight, he started attending the Arthur Rubinstein Music School in Bydgoszcz. During his first concerts at age 11, including those at the Lutoslawski Studio or the Paderewski Manor in Kona Dolna, he played Bach's preludes and fugues, Scarlatti's sonatas, works by Mozart and Chopin, but also interesting pieces like Moszkowski's *Scherzino* and later, with an orchestra this time, the concertos of Bach and Mozart as well as Chopin's *Concerto in E Minor*. For Polish Television he recorded Chopin's early polonaises in Zelazowa Wola.

At the end of the 15th Competition his interpretation of the *Concerto in E Minor* proved that he is someone who "plays Chopin like Chopin." This has been missing from the Competition for a very, very long time. The most important thing is that among 257 entrants, there was That One in whose case it could be believed that his Chopin is also everyone's Chopin. He turned out to be the best representative of a whole group of our young piano virtuosos, who also deserve congratulations for preparing for such a difficult competition performance.



Rafał Blechacz Photo: *Gazeta*

The winner of the First Prize was set apart from his rivals by the scale of his talent, which means that he will be an excellent ambassador of the Chopin Competition in the wide musical world. All can be satisfied with the performance of the Polish pianists in general. There are many excellent young people who have a feeling for and can play Chopin. With regard to more general issues, as far as standards are concerned, apart from the great creation of Rafał

Blechacz, nothing much happened during the final. Actually, this was yet another competition in which the performances of Chopin's concertos were pale and, apart from more or less proper technique, there was a lack of Chopin-like expression. Perhaps this would have been displayed by those who were rejected in stage one or two? Unless for today's young pianists Chopin's concertos are an artistic task beyond their capacity?

The winner of the 15th Competition has convinced us that this is not the case and that at a time of complete unification, it doesn't have to be so, and one can remain independent. This is extremely important, both for the

Competition and for the music of Chopin, to protect its originality from a universal pianism. The triumph of Rafał Blechacz and his performance aesthetics is a "sign of salvation" in this respect.

Congratulations to Rafał Blechacz on his wonderful success for him personally and for the music of Chopin. The works of Poland's musical genius need artists with exceptional talent, artists able to express this music's noble beauty in its purest form.

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really interested me the most. I enjoyed the way it combined acting with dance and singing. However, weeks before my graduation, I realized that I had no interest in living a performer's life. I really needed more normalcy, more of a regular schedule.

How did you end up working in radio, then?

I started working as an administrative assistant at Birmingham Music Club, which gave me insight into the business side of arts organizations. During that period, I started doing voice-overs, little commercial spots for the Music Club, and these were recorded at the public radio station in Birmingham, WBHM. Soon I realized that I really liked this public radio environment, and they seemed equally to like me. After a while I was offered a part-time irregular position, as a fill-in for announcers who were out sick or away on vacation. Later I replaced Dick Deason, long-time classical music announcer, and host of *All Things Considered*, who retired from on-air work. And that's how it all started.

At Atlanta's WABE you host two music programs – *Bach's Lunch* every afternoon, and on Sunday afternoons – *Tapestry*, devoted to choral music. Are you free to decide on the musical and verbal content of your programs?

Within certain parameters. The program director sets those parameters, and they change some over time. We have two excellent independent consultants who take kind of a stand-back, objective view. They're constantly listening; they immerse themselves in the current data about public radio across the country. They offer a lot of advice on how we might tailor our presentation to meet current listener tastes. These days "less" is better as far as what an announcer says on air. In old-days radio, you would talk for ten or fifteen minutes about a piece of music before you even began to play it; now it's more like ten or fifteen seconds. Within these parameters, each announcer chooses his or her own music, and chooses what to say or not to say on air.

In what way is your education helpful in your profession?

First of all, especially in the early days, the actor in me came very handy because I had to act like I knew what I was talking about, whether I did or not. I sometimes still do (laughs). Occasionally someone will ask me how I know all that

I know about classical music, and I very quickly tell them that I don't. You don't really need to know all the answers; you just need to know where to find them. So I have amassed a nice, well-thought-out collection of reference books. I especially like the *Lectionary of Music* by Nicolas Slonimski, which I use all the time. He had such a wonderful way, in one brief paragraph, of boiling down the plot of a Verdi opera or talking about how a Mozart's symphony came into being, in common simple language, even though he was an accomplished musicologist.

What are the most important qualities a good radio presenter should have?

First of all, I think he or she should foremost be a good companion, someone who enjoys the company of others and can provide good company. This is more important than any knowledge or technical skills.

Is this a reason why you recently you became a host of the in-depth news program *All Things Considered*?

For several months after the departure of [previous ATC host] Terri Ozanich, Lois Reitzes and Earl [Johnson, WABE's general manager] just weren't having a lot of luck finding the right person to host the program. There were a lot of candidates with strong news backgrounds, but no single personality that would draw the listener in. They were looking for someone who would offer companionship, not necessarily for a newsperson or journalist. So Lois asked me if I would be interested, and I said, "Yes."

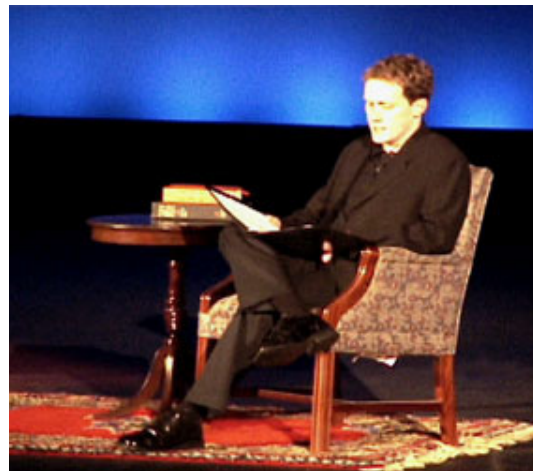
In what way is it different from hosting a classical music program?

The pace of *All Things Considered* is so much quicker. At the top of each hour we have about four minutes to present headlines, weather, sometimes traffic, and underwriting. The first few weeks I felt like a sixteen-year-old in rush-hour traffic driving for the first time. I am glad that I still have that one hour of classical music daily, where I can just relax and take things at a slower pace.

Besides working for public radio and television, you host local art events, among them concerts organized by the Chopin Society of Atlanta...

My collaborations with the CSA and Piotr Folkert have probably been the ones that I've most enjoyed since coming to

Atlanta. I think Piotr and I met in 1999, when I introduced a performance he gave at Spivey Hall. We became friends immediately. Soon after that, he asked me if I would be interested in serving as a host/narrator for a program that he would be doing honoring the anniversary of Chopin's death. I was quite honored and had no fear, initially, of doing the program until he came in one day with the script. The script was beautifully



John Lemley Photo: Elżbieta Górtler-Krawczyńska

written in every aspect. What frightened me were all those Polish names. And I said: "Piotr, I am afraid I am going to butcher every one of these names!" He assured me that with a little practice and maybe drawing on my acting skills, I could bring it together. I must quickly admit that my Polish pronunciation is awful, but the audiences have been very kind, and I think for the most part they know of whom I am speaking.

During that first program I wore a very hot and heavy costume from the Chopin era. Thankfully the air conditioning was running quite well. I was reading the script from this beautiful, very valuable desk, rented from an antique store, and on its corner was this huge candelabrum. One of the vents was blowing cold air directly onto the candles, and they began to melt rapidly, with cascades of wax pouring onto the table! Anyway, I was genuinely surprised when Piotr called and asked that I also host the program on Bach's music. I thought either that he was the kindest gentleman on the face of the planet or maybe I wasn't as bad as I thought I was. And then there was the jazz program. That was a lot of fun too, and something completely different. I also enjoyed the concert "Reflections on Chopin" with Adam Makowicz and Piotr; it was fascinating to hear first Piotr play Chopin's original piece and then the jazz interpretation by Adam Makowicz.

Ingrid Fliter awarded Gilmore Artist Award

Ingrid Fliter has won the 2006 Gilmore Artist Award and a \$300,000 cash prize.

The prestigious Gilmore Artist Awards, founded in 1989, are presented by the Irving S. Gilmore International



Carlos Layus, Consul General of Argentina, Dorota Lato, President of Chopin Society of Atlanta, and Ingrid Fliter

Photo: Boguslaw Kubica

Keyboard Festival. Candidates, are not informed that they are being considered for the award; they are nominated confidentially and then evaluated by a six-member committee.

In a statement, Daniel R. Gustin, director of the Gilmore and a member of the advisory committee, said, "With a world of pianists to choose from, we spent over two years listening to many greatly talented artists, but in the end we were unanimously swept away by Ingrid Fliter's astonishing pianist prowess and her overall musicianship."

Concert Review:

Ingrid Fliter

By Beata Olszok

On October 15, 2005, at the Roswell Cultural Arts Center, the Chopin Society of Atlanta presented a piano recital by Ingrid Fliter, winner of the Second Prize and Silver Medal at the 2000

in Warsaw. In the audience were sponsors and supporters of the Chopin Society of Atlanta, as well as music connoisseurs and young listeners, all fans of Chopin's music.

Ms. Fliter, a young and talented Argentinean musician, brought a modern spirit to the classical sounds of Chopin's work. She fluently transitioned from a smooth, delicate and lyrical touch to powerful yet expressive keyboard strokes, greatly impressing the audience with her technical ability and expressiveness. She was rewarded with sustained applause after each piece, and at the end of the performance, an extended ovation.

Editorial Staff:

Dorota Lato, President, Chopin Society of Atlanta

Editor	Mary Montgomery
Assistant Editor	Bożena Zaremba
Proofreader	Mim Eisenberg

Children's Corner...

When Chopin left Warsaw, he traveled to Vienna in order to establish himself as a composer and performer. How did he plan to achieve this goal?

Answer: He performed two concerts of his works, both of which sold out but were only marginally profitable. After months of indifference from the Viennese public, he moved to Paris.

Chopin Society of Atlanta
540 Morton Mill Court
Alpharetta, GA 30022
www.chopinatlanta.com