

VIVIANE HAGNER

violin

"Her rich, burnished tone, crystalline articulation and subtle expression grab and leave a lasting impression...[Hagner] gave a spine-chilling recital, an almost hauntingly masterful display of technique and artistry."

-The Washington Post



VIVIANE HAGNER

Violin



Munich-born violinist Viviane Hagner has garnered exceptional praise for her insightful musicality and passionate artistry. Making her international debut at the age of 12, she participated in the legendary joint concert of the Israel and Berlin Philharmonics, conducted by Zubin Mehta in Tel Aviv, a year later. Since then, Hagner has developed a depth and maturity in her playing that resonates in her stage presence and assurance.

Appearing with the world's great orchestras, Hagner's concerto appearances include the Berlin Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Leipzig Gewandhaus, New York Philharmonic, and the Philharmonia Orchestra, working with conductors such as Ashkenazy, Barenboim, Eschenbach and Salonen as well as a Carnegie Hall appearance with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra.

In the 24/25 season, Viviane performs with the Poznań Philharmonic Orchestra multiple times showcasing the violin concertos of Tansman and Brahms. She joins the Deutsche Radio Philharmonie and Pietari Inkinen for the Korngold violin concerto and engages in a series of chamber music performances. Her trio, featuring pianist Till Fellner and cellist Adrian Brendel, will perform at the Kronberg Festival and Schubertiade Hohenems, highlighting their exceptional collaboration. Additionally, Viviane performs a recital with pianist Lilit Grigoryan in Girona, featuring Shostakovich's Sonata for Violin and Piano. A highlight of the season is her performance at the Ultraschall Festival, where she gives the premiere of a newly discovered sonata by Aribert Reimann, adding a unique and exciting dimension to her already diverse repertoire.

Highlights from last season include her residency with the Orchestre National de Bretagne, where she performed the Walton and Tchaikovsky Violin Concertos and directed a program featuring works by Bach and Mendelssohn. Additionally, Hagner play-directed a series of concerts with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, featuring Mendelssohn's Sinfonia No. 10 and his Violin Concerto in E Minor. She also continued her project performing Schoenberg's Verklärte Nacht, incorporating a visual element with mime artists Bodecker & Neander in Bremen.

Previous seasons saw Hagner performing with Berlin's Komische Oper Orchestra under Ainars Rubikis, Prague's National Opera Orchestra under Karl-Heinz Steffens, and the Orquestra de Valencia with Alexander Liebreich. In North America, she returned to the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa for performances of Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante alongside Pinchas Zukerman, and undertook a residency in Vancouver where she performed Unsuk Chin's Violin Concerto with Otto Tausk, as well as participating in chamber music performances and masterclasses.

In addition to bringing insight and virtuosity to the central concerto repertoire, Hagner is a passionate advocate for new, neglected, and undiscovered music, championing composers such as Sofia Gubaidulina, Karl Amadeus Hartmann, and Witold Lutoslawski. As the dedicatee of Unsuk Chin's Violin Concerto, she premiered the piece in 2002 with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester under Kent Nagano and has since performed it across Europe, the US, and Brazil.

A committed chamber musician, Hagner regularly appears in prestigious venues such as the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Berlin Konzerthaus, London's Wigmore Hall, Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels, and Zurich Tonhalle. She also performs at renowned festivals worldwide, including the Ravello Festival, Salzburg Easter Festival, and Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival.

Hagner joined the BBC Philharmonic, conductor Christian Karlsen, and guitarist Jacob Kellermann to record Tōru Takemitsu's Spectral Canticle, which was released on BIS in May 2023. Additionally, the Hyperion label issued her performances of Vieuxtemps Violin Concerti 4 & 5, and the Canadian company Analekta released her recording of Unsuk Chin's Violin Concerto with Kent Nagano and the Montreal Symphony

Orchestra. Her performance of Christian Jost's TiefenRausch with the Essen Philharmonic, conducted by the composer, was released by the Capriccio label to critical acclaim, and she recorded Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in D minor with the Dogma Chamber Orchestra for the MDG label.

Hagner is the co-founder and Artistic Director of Krzyżowa-Music, an ambitious festival promoting the exchange of ideas and culture, and providing young and aspiring musicians the opportunity to rehearse and perform with internationally acclaimed artists. In summer 2024, they celebrate their 10th edition for the festival. She was recently awarded the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany (Bundesverdienstkreuz) for her work on the cultural exchange between Germany and Poland, predominantly for her work at the festival, as well as performances in both countries.

Residing in Berlin where she grew up, she has been a Professor at the Mannheim Conservatory of Music and Performing Arts since 2013.

This biography is valid for use until July 2025. We update our biographies regularly and ask that they are not altered without permission. For updated versions, please e-mail ih@jamesbrownmanagement.com

Viviane Hagner

Critical Acclaim



"She can muse, dance and protest with remarkable facility, and does not shy on her feelings... Hagner never lets us forget this mix of past and present, but the result she presents stands triumphantly on its own."

Vancouver Classical Music

"Hagner delivered an honest-to-goodness interpretation, and a gutsy one at that, a perfect storm of passion, power, and technical wizardry."

The Plain Dealer

"Deeply committed... Utterly convincing... Potent emotional power."

The Strad

"Her rich, burnished tone, crystalline articulation and subtle expression grab attention and leave a lasting impression ... the 27 year-old violinist from Munich gave a spine-chilling recital, an almost hauntingly masterful display of technique and artistry."

The Washington Post

"Viviane Hagner proved to be a mighty soloist, unflinching and resolute as she powered through the most challenging of passages. There was a classic solidity about Hagner's playing which suited Beethoven's structured, four square work: she mapped out virtuosic passages with thrilling accuracy, hitting every high note and every chord in an impressive display of virtuosity, impassioned but not passionate."

Sydney Morning Herald

"Violinist Viviane plays with a brilliant richness of tone, emphasized by a very fast vibrato which gives a dark, viola-like headiness to the lower strings and real brightness to the upper ones."

BBC Music Magazine

"At 24, German violinist Viviane Hagner is a superb artist whose recital Tuesday night at the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater was surely just one more step toward a major career. She played with breathtaking assurance and originality and her command of the instrument is such that its production falls naturally and easily on the ear. When she wants, her tone has a beautifully centered luster, but she shades it constantly to assume the color and character of the music."

The Washington Post

"Viviane Hagner made a strong Milwaukee debut in Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 2. The vigor and bite of her bowing and accents brought out the rhythmic starch in this music, and her singing legato line and tasty vibrato brought out its contrasting sweetness and delicacy. Hagner shaded pitch and timbre to hover between innocence and melancholy."

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

“When she played, her instrument resonated with darkly hued tone – clean and solid. An unfettered synchronicity developed between soloist and orchestra. Cheers of ‘brava’ from a standing audience brought an encore of Bach’s *Chaconne* from the Partita in D minor. Ringing harmonies sounded as her bow rocked quickly across the violin’s bridge. Interpretative genius was evident as she developed purposeful phrases throughout the unaccompanied work.”

Salt Lake Tribune

“Hagner’s exquisitely expressive playing, coupled with her impressive technical command of her instrument, made this performance stunningly noteworthy. She exhibited a sensitivity to the nuances of the score that added depth and an extra dimension to the music. This was a performance of the highest caliber.”

Deseret Morning News

“Hagner’s performance was technically faultless, musically mature.”

The Independent on Sunday

“Hagner’s take on the Mendelssohn was fresh, bright and deservedly well-received”

St. Louis Classical Examiner

“She’s a real find: a gifted violinist with a clear, consistently lovely singing tone, fine musical intelligence and outstanding technique. She had a superb sense of the Mendelssohn’s inherent passion, conveying it consistently. Her playing was a joy on every level, and she deserved the huge ovation she received from Friday’s audience. It was a gorgeous performance from all concerned, in just about every respect.”

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

“The performance becomes quite fiery and flamboyant, Hagner’s trills and runs striking a wonderful balance between poetry--in the C Major second subject--and ensuing fireworks.”

Audiophile Audition

“The words "fresh" and "bracing" also came to mind as I listened to Viviane Hagner's reading of the Mendelssohn E-Minor Violin Concerto. The young German violinist, who was making her CSO debut, brought a sweet, pure tone and unaffected lyrical grace to the Romantic warhorse. The slow movement was notable for its poised singing line, the finale for its crisp articulation.”

The Chicago Tribune

Hagner, slight and muscular with a powerful bowing-arm technique, brought crystalline rigour to this popular work.

The Observer

“Hagner was a very eloquent soloist, her somewhat dark tone beautifully expressive, her reading of the work shot through with an almost painful poignancy. She made this a work of prayer and pain, a poetic apprehension of death and an evocation of counterpoising memories of youth and beauty, of considerable power.”

Seen and Heard International

Viviane Hagner

Munich-born violinist Viviane Hagner has been steadily building an international career since her debut at the age of 12, followed a year later by a historic appearance at a joint concert by the Israel and Berlin Philharmonics.

She's known as a brilliant yet thoughtful player, garnering glowing comments about her "magnificent assurance" and "rich, burnished tone". In this past season debuts with American orchestras have been followed by requests for return visits.

Stepping outside the core repertoire, Hagner is an ardent champion of new music, and has two world premieres to her name: Unsuk Chin's Concerto in 2002 (a performance that "may well be unimprovable," according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*) and Simon Holt's Concerto in 2006.

Chamber music is another passion; she's a regular at the main festivals, and in October joins pianist Stephen Kovacevich in his Brahms-and-Bartók residency at the Wigmore Hall in London. On disc, she's recorded the Tchaikovsky Concerto, and her solo recording of Bartók, Hartmann and Bach (*Altara*) won praise last year.

**Photographed at the
Art Workers Guild, London**

Born 1977, Munich

Plans A second *Altara* disc – Brahms's Hungarian Dances – is scheduled for release in February, and forthcoming performances include the Wigmore Hall concerts (see above), Szymanowski's First Concerto with the BBC Scottish (October), Dresden (November) and Zürich (December) orchestras, returns to Wigmore Hall for Messiaen (*Quartet for the End of Time* – also touring in Europe) and the Elliott Carter centenary in December, and dates in The Hague (Brahms Concerto).

Viviane Hagner

 Irish Examiner

June 24, 2019



Bantry becomes a mecca for music lovers from Friday as a legion of musicians prepare to descend for the West Cork Chamber Music Festival, now entering its 24th year. Masters, apprentices, luthiers and archetiers, rising stars and those already lodged in the firmament will mingle during the ten-day programme.

It's a triumph of logistics masterminded by director Francis Humphreys that presents up to six concerts and four masterclasses each day as well as a burgeoning fringe.

This year's festival is highly strung with string quartets and solo virtuosos dominating the schedule.

Headlining the stellar line up is German violinist, Viviane Hagner.

Since her debut at the age of 13, in the legendary joint concert of the Israel and Berlin Philharmonics conducted by Zubin

Mehta, Hagner has enjoyed a busy career playing with the world's leading orchestras and more recently has spearheaded a new chamber music project at Kreisau in Poland. It is two decades since Hagner first came to Bantry early in her professional career. When I spoke to her at her home in Berlin, she reminisced on her first visit.

"Francis had asked me play quite specific works. It was my first time to play the Bartok Sonata for Solo Violin. Performing a piece for the first time is quite memorable.

"I met Sigmund Nissel, violinist of the Amadeus Quartet there. It was very special. As a young violinist to have someone that you looked up to, a player from one of the most prestigious quartets hear you play.

"He was such a kind man and we had good conversations."

The festival gets ahead of the Beethoven 250th celebrations with the programming of the last three Piano Trios.

Hagner joins pianist Barry Douglas and cellist Johannes Moser to complete the series of Beethoven trios they began in 2017.

The set includes 'the Ghost' and 'the Archduke' trios, two of the best-known works for this combination.

What next? When the musicians include, Barry Douglas, a Tchaikovsky Piano Competition Gold Medallist, the Russian master's elegiac Piano Trio (A minor) seems an obvious choice.

"It is a very expansive piece commemorating the death of a friend. It expresses his grief and nostalgia very poetically.

"He may have been hesitant to write for this combination but he came up with something quite grand that fully exploits the expressive range of the ensemble.

"He manages to make the piano trio sound almost orchestral and then so intimate, almost fragile."

The luxury of having more than a hundred musicians stationed in the seaside town for a stretch provides the perfect incubator for new musical alliances to coalesce.

While Hagner is looking forward to reuniting with her trio colleagues of 2017, she enthuses about forming an ensemble to play a Brahms quartet with musicians she will play with for the first time.

Her new colleagues include the young British cellist Laura van der Heijden, (BBC Young Musician winner in 2012 at age 14) and Hungarian pianist, Dénes Varjon.

The programme at West Cork is so diverse and well thought out and the audiences are open and appreciative. Francis has created something very special in Bantry.

But it won't be music all the way for Hagner. There will be time too for sandcastles on the beach with her four-year-old daughter who will travel to Bantry with her.

Asked to nominate her favourite spot in Bantry she muses: "I am always impressed with the whole gardens but there is one part that is so romantic.

"There is a little bridge like you would see in a painting. When you cross it and keep walking, I have the feeling that I am lost in nature."

Other String players at WCM include Henning Kraggerud, Marc Daniel, Emmanuelle Bertrand, Mairéad Hickey, Ellen Nisbeth and four international quartets; Zaide, Chiaroscuro, Borusan, Dahlkvist

Viviane Hagner



January 27, 2019

Orchestra takes a 'Round Trip to Paris'

By Dahlia Ghabour

Clark Rundell loves working directly with composers and championing new music. He's become known for commanding intricate works and has built a reputation as a guest conductor. This week, he brings his talents and passions to the next Sarasota Orchestra Masterworks concert.

Rundell will guest conduct "Round Trip to Paris," a program that features some relatively recent composers and works inspired by both New York and Paris. The concert kicks off with George Gershwin's classic "An American in Paris" before violinist Viviane Hagner takes the stage with Henri Francois Joseph Vieuxtemps' Violin Concerto No. 5. Then, a quick jaunt through Camille Saint-Saëns' "Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso" and Samuel Barber's "Night Flight" lead into Leonard Bernstein's "On the Waterfront Symphonic Suite."

"This concert is America and Paris, precisely," Rundell said. "Barber lived much of his life in New York. Gershwin, Bernstein and Barber are New York and the other two composers are Paris. It's remarkable how much they have in common with their tunes and amazing melodies."

Rundell said Gershwin's orchestration, countermelodies and unusual structure stand out in the "An American In Paris" piece, which he described as "genius." But Gershwin died young and some of his original music has been modified for convenience. Now, a new edition of "An American in Paris" is available, and Rundell believes the Sarasota performance will mark its Florida premiere.

"People will really notice the difference," he said. "There's a huge one right at the very end — before the last entrance of the big tune, there's a timpani roll that was never written by Gershwin. Another conductor wrote that in and it made it into print. The beauty of this edition is that there's a photocopy of the original score, where it's not there."

The Vieuxtemps concerto, meanwhile, "has a lot of the spirit of the Gershwin." Vieuxtemps wrote mostly for himself, Rundell said, and his understanding of the violin is "legendary." Rundell described Hagner, who will be playing the piece, as "quite astonishing."

"For people to watch her play music is like watching Usain Bolt run," Rundell said. "What she does physically and artistically ... I cannot wait. She's an extraordinary artist." Hagner, who made her debut at age 13 in a joint concert of the Israel and Berlin philharmonics led by Zubin Mehta, said the concerto is not asked for as often as the standard Beethoven violin concertos, so she's excited to play it. The piece is technically challenging because of Vieuxtemps' own skill with the violin — and it's also "musically beautiful, with all the sparkle and explosive fireworks you can produce on the violin," she said.

"The cadenza is a bit surprising and fully integrated into the piece," she said. "At the time this was relatively new. Most previous concertos left it up to the violinist to come up with his or her own. So I think as a performer one should probably really play this. And of course it reflects on the themes

from the movements in the concerto and also gets very dramatic.”

The Saint-Saëns piece is quick, lighthearted and joyful; the Barber, Rundell said, exists as a tone poem excerpted from a symphony he wrote about serving in World War II.

“This ‘Night Flight’ is his depiction of a pilot flying back late at night after a mission, whatever is done is done,” he said. “There’s a bit with an electronic instrument, now transposed onto a clarinet that sounds like the tone that they would follow back to base. It has a solitude and loneliness, the way you’d feel after coming home from something extremely intense.”

The concert concludes with Bernstein’s only film score, for Marlon Brando’s “On the Waterfront.”

The intensity of the film comes through in the music, which goes from a mafia dock fight to a beautiful love theme and back.

“This isn’t just a succession of tunes,” Rundell said. “He carefully decided what music and how long to make this statement. The suite has a symphonic structure to it, and the characters and strength of will he shows in the music make it a very moving piece.”

Viviane Hagner

THE IRISH TIMES

June 29, 2017

Getting to know you: Viviane Hagner

By Michael Dervan

Other career?

Good question. But for me it's quite unthinkable not to have become a musician. But if I have to choose, I love being out in the green, in the garden, so, not a gardener, but something in nature would be great. Maybe a garden designer.

Musical hero/heroine?

I adore the human voice, so it may be a singer. Any musical voice that touches me is something I look up to. Someone like Maria Callas is very strong. And the cellist Jacqueline du Pré. She goes straight into your heart, something which I find very admirable.

Looking forward to in Bantry?

It's really everything. I'm really looking forward to coming back after quite a few years. It's an extremely beautiful venue, and usually an extremely well thought-through programme, one that I'm very happy to be part of. For me there are musical collaborations with new and old colleagues. For instance, I'll be playing Beethoven trios with Barry Douglas, who I'm meeting for the first time, and Johannes Moser, with whom I've played before, though not in a trio.

Sets your teeth on edge?

Something that's predictable, I think. I hate that idea. I hate easy-listening, anything that I'm not forced to listen 100 per cent to. I like to dive fully into music. If it stays on the surface, it's not for me.

Musical bliss?

The complete opposite. Things that surprise me, something that I think is really worth listening to. It can be the classics or something that I hear for the first time but is a real discovery for me.

Non-musical heaven?

Right now it's spending time with my family, especially with my little daughter. Any smile, any laughter from the little one gives me the greatest bliss.

Non-musical hell?

Fear is terrible, and being under too much stress, time-wise. If I think I cannot fulfil things the way I want to. That's not hell, really. Hell would be huge.

Something we mightn't know?

There's hardly anything I cannot enjoy eating if it's really well made. I'm extremely curious to try anything new when it comes to food.



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Viviane Hagner

The San Diego
Union-Tribune.

January 10, 2013

THE MAGIC OF MENDELSSOHN

Composer's violin concerto has been a big part of Viviane Hagner's repertoire

By James Chute



Violinist Viviane Hagner was 12 years old when she first performed the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto, a year before she made a breakthrough appearance in a special, joint concert of the Berlin and Israel Philharmonic orchestras conducted by Zubin Mehta.

It is a piece that has not only withstood the test of time, but withstood the test of endless repetition, as it is arguably the most performed of any violin concerto (arguable only because the Beethoven and Tchaikovsky violin concertos are close runners-up).

"It's been a big part of my musical life for a very long time," said the highly regarded German violinist on the phone from New

York, where she was performing. "But still to this day, even though it's one of the most popular and often performed concertos in my repertoire, I still cherish it so much. I cannot think of a season where I haven't performed it."

Hagner — who performs it this weekend in the San Diego Symphony Masterworks concerts at Copley Symphony Hall conducted by music director Jahja Ling — offered some insight on the work's appeal to her.

- Composed by Mendelssohn essentially in collaboration with violinist Ferdinand David, who premiered it in 1845, the work is unusually idiomatic to the violin.

"I think it's the most perfect concerto, if you can say that," Hagner said. "It has everything. It brings out the lyrical aspects of the violin, and the melodies are beautiful. Also, it has a virtuoso aspect. And it has a light character, which is typical of Mendelssohn. I never get tired of playing it."

- The work's more transparent textures (especially when compared with other 19th-century composers such as Brahms or Schumann) allow the soloist to assume a role that Hagner finds especially agreeable. It is not a drama so much as it is a dialogue.

"It's a piece that contains interesting aspects in all parts of the orchestra," she said. "I listen to what's going on and they react to what I do and I react to what they do. That's what makes it for me really enjoyable to perform a concerto. I'm not just playing my

solo line from the beginning to the end. I want it to work almost like a chamber music piece.”

- The work’s lyrical nature also speaks to Hagner’s musical aspirations, which started at age 3 on the piano before she started playing violin at age 4.

“Even though I enjoyed playing the piano, I felt more drawn to the violin,” she said. “I just felt like I could somehow make the sound more my own and also express myself

more clearly and more easily on the violin than the piano. It’s also close to the human voice. ... Ultimately, the human voice is what touches (us) most immediately. That’s what I’m trying to achieve.”

Mendelssohn’s violin concerto, his last large orchestral work, took Mendelssohn six years to complete. Even after submitting a final score in 1844, he kept polishing the work and making changes up until the premiere in Leipzig in 1845.

Viviane Hagner

The Daily Telegraph

May 3, 2012

How pasta is powering young artists' music

By Michael White



Viviane Hagner and Lawrence Power rehearsing at Lake Maggiore

This Friday evening at the Queen Elizabeth Hall (QEH) you'll find an ensemble of four young, star musicians brought together in the way that Simon Cowell might bring together some new boy-band, but with higher aspirations.

Viviane Hagner, Lawrence Power, Christian Poltera and Khatia Buniatishvili are all individually well-established in their careers: violinist Hagner was playing a Festival Hall concerto date with the Philharmonia only a few weeks ago. Power is arguably the leading UK viola-player. Poltera probably the best Swiss cellist, and pianist Buniatishvili one of Sony's hottest

recent signings.

What they have in common though, is that they're all past winners of a Borletti-Buitoni Trust (BBT) award: a gift which, over the past nine years of functioning, has become a sort of laying-on-of-hands within the classical world. Essentially the hands are those of Mitsuko Uchida who presides over the artistic decisions of the Trust. And the objective is to support promising young artists in the tough years between leaving college and making a go of things.

The award involves money, but it has to be a for an agreed project that might be anything from building a website to underwriting a



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concert series. The soprano Elizabeth Watts is using hers to commission a one-woman opera, while a certain string quartet – with an element of cheek – used theirs to fund a year off doing nothing. They argued that they'd been working so hard to keep body and soul together they needed a break. The Trust believed them, so they must have had a point.

Cash aside though, BBT award-winners get drafted into something like a family with on-tap advice, encouragement, PR support, and incidental help of the kind that agents used to give but often don't these days. They even get the use of 'safe house': a sprawling alpine lodge that isn't actually in the alps but on a hillside overlooking Lake Maggiore, Italy. It's available to any of the Trust's award-winners to take time out. The house is owned by Ilara Borletti Buitoni – the woman who created and bankrolls the

Trust, courtesy of family money and a pasta business.

I've just been there myself – not because the BBT acknowledges my worth in any way (damn it) but because the Trust wanted to show me what goes on there. And on the day I was there, that was the meeting of the four artists I mentioned above. They hadn't met each other before, but the Trust thought they should. And at Friday's concert, which needless to say the Trust has organised, they'll be playing the ensemble pieces (Beethoven and Brahms) they were rehearsing there.

Having spent 48 hours imprisoned by torrential rain (so no escape) with them and the Brahms G minor Piano Quartet, I feel I know what they have to say about it: rain sucked, Brahms shone. Concert recommended.

Viviane Hagner

The New York Times

April 27, 2012

THE Listings

Classical



RICHARD TERMINE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

★ **ORPHEUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA** (Saturday) The superb German violinist Viviane Hagner will be the soloist with this conductorless orchestra, above, in Beethoven's Romance in F (Op. 50) and the Vieuxtemps Violin Concerto No. 5. Those two pieces are the centerpieces of a program that also includes the premiere of a promising new work by Alex Mincek, "Pendulum IX: Machina/Humana," and Franz Schreker's Scherzo for Strings and Mozart's Symphony No. 40. At 7 p.m., Isaac Stern Auditorium, Carnegie Hall, (212) 247-7800, carnegiehall.org; \$14.50 to \$110. (Allan Kozinn)



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711 WEST END AVENUE SUITE 5KN NEW YORK NY 10025 (212) 222-4843 TEL (212) 222-7321 FAX WWW.KIRSHBAUMASSOCIATES.COM

Viviane Hagner

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

January 27, 2011

Violinist Viviane Hagner looked beyond the label of prodigy

By Andrew Druckenbrod

Pittsburgh's classical-music scene has been the unlikely witness to the artistic growth of a talented German violinist.

Munich-born Viviane Hagner performed here first in 2002, placed by Young Concert Artists. The concert series of Rodef Shalom Congregation in Shadyside presented her and she impressed with talent galore and potential to boot. That was realized when she performed with the Pittsburgh Symphony little more than a year later. But she had help for that Heinz Hall date in the person of violinist Pinchas Zukerman. The two performed Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat Major for Violin and Viola, with Mr. Zukerman playing viola.

This weekend Ms. Hagner, 33, will sail on her own, soloing in Franz Haydn's Violin Concerto No. 1, giving the audience the latest point on her relatively slow rise to fame as a violinist.

Ms. Hagner did have the sort of appearance that has launched young musicians into the business early. At the age of 13, she performed in the high-profile "Joint Concert" of the Israel and Berlin Philharmonics in Tel Aviv conducted by Zubin Mehta. But she held off from capitalizing on the event.

"When I was young I had some smart people and musicians who told me that if you would like to have a long life in music, you should just try to grow as a musician," says



Ms. Hagner, who started studying the violin at age 4. "It is a longer and more difficult way, but for a musician, it can be best."

If prodigies are rare, then prodigious talents who take their time to develop are rarer.

"When I look at

people who have had a career in music for several decades, where you have an opportunity to grow in music, there are not so many," she says. "There is a huge danger in ... playing well at a young age -- it can become not that interesting."

One of those musicians who cautioned Ms. Hagner about a fast career pace is Mr. Zukerman, with whom she studied at the Manhattan School of Music. His own career also took time to develop. He didn't make his major concert debut until his was nearly 20.

"The pieces of advice he gave to me are very inspiring," she says. "They are not just on the actual pieces we worked on, but how he is as a musician."

Ms. Hagner is a champion of care for seniors. "Playing for elderly people, you get all these grateful faces," she says. "They get these memories when I play. It is good to educate children in music, but the elderly should not be forgotten."

These days her career has the bustle common to all top soloists, whether performing with her sister, pianist Nicole Hagner, or playing with orchestras the

world over. One, the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, holds special meaning as her mother is Korean. And since her father is German, Ms. Hagner's recent tour with the Seoul Philharmonic throughout Europe brought the two cultures together in a poignant way for her.

"It was quite an exciting trip," she says. So is hers in music -- at her own pace.

Viviane Hagner

SEEN AND HEARD INTERNATIONAL

MusicWeb International's Worldwide Concert and Opera Reviews

October 1, 2009

Hear the Violin Sing: Viviane Hagner performs in concert with BBC National Orchestra of Wales at Cardiff's St. David's Hall 2.10.2009 (BK)



One of the most eagerly watched violinists to emerge in recent years, Viviane Hagner joins the BBC National Orchestra of Wales for the second concert in the Orchestra's series at St David's Hall, Cardiff at 7p.m. on Friday 2 October. Hagner will play composer Berg's final masterwork – the tragic Violin Concerto which movingly ends with a meditation on one of Bach's best known chorales.

Still in her 20s, Munich born Hagner has played with the world's greatest orchestras and is particularly noted for her authoritative performances of contemporary works. She joined BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Wales national Orchestra for their German tour and the combination of Orchestra and soloist received an amazing reaction from audiences and her performances continue to cause a sensation with critics:

“Hagner’s performance, vibrant, warm toned and jaw droppingly precise, may well be unimprovable.” *San Francisco Chronicle*

Viviane Hagner will unite with the Orchestra’s Swiss Principal Conductor Thierry Fischer for their first performance together. The concert programme for the evening is very much at the heart of the conductor’s vision and passion with grandeur of Bach/Stokowski’s *Tocatta & Fugue* to the stormy opening of Brahms *First Symphony* in addition to Berg’s work; heartfelt music that never fails to connect with audiences.

This is the first of four concerts this autumn at St David’s Hall featuring all four of Brahms’ Symphonies. The concert will be recorded live for Radio 3.

Bill Kenny

Viviane Hagner

Deseret News

March 22, 2009

by Edward Reichel

American Composers in Spotlight

This weekend's Utah Symphony concerts spotlight American music. But there won't be anything by George Gershwin or Leonard Bernstein.

Instead, the program focuses on works by some other 20th century composers. There will be a suite from John Williams' score to the film "JFK" and several pieces by Charles Ives, including his Third Symphony. Erich Wolfgang Korngold's Violin Concerto, which uses themes from a number of his Hollywood film scores, rounds out the program.

Soloist for the Korngold will be Viviane Hagner, who was last seen in Abravanel Hall two years ago as the violin half in the Brahms Double Concerto.

The young German violinist counts the Korngold concerto as one of her favorites. "I love it," she told the Deseret News in a phone interview from her home in Berlin. "It's a delightful concerto. It's violinistically well written, but challenging."

And one can't help but be swayed by the beauty of the music, she added. "He wrote some beautiful melodies. The concerto has all these dreamy moods that put you in another world, and the slow movement puts you in the world of fantasy."

Hagner dismisses the criticism that has been heaped on Korngold as being a mere Hollywood hack. "He has a

very distinct language. People mistakenly call it Hollywood music, but people forget that he set the standard for film music. He created the important elements in Hollywood music."

The work has been in Hagner's repertoire for only a couple of years, and she relishes every opportunity to play it. It's a work that's more popular in the U.S. than in Europe, she said. "I especially enjoy performing it in the States, because American audiences do seem to be more familiar with this music."

While Korngold's concerto, which he wrote for Jascha Heifetz in 1947, has seen its popularity revive in the past decade, there are still only a handful of violinists who play it. And for Hagner, it fits right in with her penchant for adding relatively little-known works to her repertoire.

Along with the Korngold, she also has the violin concertos by Karl Amadeus Hartmann and Karl Goldmark in her catalog, as well as newer concertos by Krzysztof Penderecki and Simon Holt.

"I enjoy playing the concertos by Beethoven, Brahms and Bartók," she said, "but I also like to discover works that have been neglected and include them in my (repertoire)."

Hagner has an exhausting schedule of tours each season. When she spoke with the Deseret News, she had



just returned from a 10-day tour to Japan. Prior to that, she played eight concerts in Germany, England and Spain.

And her engagement with the Utah Symphony is the culmination of a tour that began in Ottawa, Canada.

"It keeps me busy," she said with a laugh.

For years, Hagner has been fortunate enough to play on a 1717 Stradivarius that has been on extended loan to her through the Nippon Music Foundation. "It is an exceptional instrument," she said.

Young violinists normally can't afford to buy a multi-million-dollar Stradivarius, and there are only a few such instruments on loan to prom-

ising young artists. Hagner, therefore, feels privileged to be able to play one of these legendary instruments.

"Violinists of my generation cannot buy such a violin, but it's a tremendous help to play a Stradivarius. I have learned so much from it, particularly about sound production."

While having the right violin is important, it really comes down to the violinist, Hagner said. A great violinist can make any instrument sound good, but the reverse doesn't hold. "It helps to have a wonderful instrument, but you also need a decent player to play it at a certain level."

Viviane Hagner

THE
NEW YORKER

February 11 and 18, 2008



Viviane Hagner performs Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante with the violist Pinchas Zukerman and the Manhattan School of Music Chamber Sinfonia on Feb. 16.

Viviane Hagner

The New York Times

Arts&LEISURE

THE NEW SEASON MUSIC • ART • ARCHITECTURE

September 9, 2007

A Fiddler in the City, After Years Elsewhere

By Allan Kozinn

WELL into the 20th century female violin stars — women who not only were virtuoso players but had durable, headlining careers as well — were few and far between. There was Maud Powell, who lived until 1920, long enough to make recordings, and whose name still commands respect among aficionados. The extraordinary violinist Ginette Neveu, born the year before Powell died, was an exciting, supremely lyrical player who was on her way to a big career when she died in a plane crash at 30, in 1949.

In the decades that followed, Erica Morini and Ida Haendel cracked the glass ceiling. But even when things really began to change — in the 1980s, when Kyung-Wha Chung, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg and Midori stepped into the spotlight — superstar fiddling was still mostly a man's world.

No longer. In the last decade, most of the must-hear violinists have been women. Think of Hilary Hahn, Leila Josefowicz, Julia Fischer, Janine Jansen, Jennifer Koh and Nicola Benedetti, all busily playing concerts and making recordings.

Violin connoisseurs already include Viviane Hagner on that list, but Ms. Hagner, 30, has been taking her time. After teenage debuts with the Israel Philharmonic and the Berlin Philharmonic, she continued her studies with Pinchas Zukerman and made her New York debut at a 1999 Mostly Mozart concert, playing Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante for violin and viola with Mr. Zukerman. Apart from a debut re-

tok and Brahms at the 92nd Street Y at the end of the month. And for old times sake, she plays Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante, again with Mr. Zukerman, at the Manhattan School of Music in February.

A new recording of unaccompanied works by Bartok, Karl Amadeus Hartmann and Bach shows that she has the goods: confident phrasing, rhythmic precision, a flexible and sometimes appealingly earthy tone, all the speed you could want and the maturity to use it expressively. The Bartok Sonata and the Bach Chaconne, both included, are on her program at the Y. If you weren't paying attention the first time, now is the time to tune in.



MARCO BORGGREVE

The violinist Viviane Hagner will make her New York Philharmonic debut in January.



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Viviane Hagner

The Boston Globe

February 8, 2008

She's unbowed by silly questions

By Geoff Edgers



This weekend, German violinist Viviane Hagner is making her Boston Symphony Orchestra debut. Hagner, 31, performs Prokofiev's light and lyrical Violin Concerto No. 1 under the direction of Charles Dutoit. She is one of three young violinists heading to Symphony Hall over the next few weeks, and I sent each of them a list of questions. Some good, some perhaps a bit on the too-silly side. But she answered them.

Q: What do wish you had more time for?

A: I love watching movie classics and am fascinated by the art of directing. I wish I had more time to watch some of my favorite movies over and over. I also wish to be able to spend more time learning languages, with Chinese being my current main interest. And being on the road a lot, I wish I had more time to be with my family and friends and home.

Q: How much did your violin cost?

A: The violin is on loan from the Nippon Music Foundation. While I cannot tell you the actual price of the violin, it is definitely way above what I could afford. This is why I am so grateful for the generous loan from the Foundation.

Q: What's the most surprising thing you've ever played, either in concert or just at home?



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A: "Rockomotion" by Eugen Regnier. This was one of the very first pieces ever written for me (more than 10 years ago). My sister Nicole and I presented its premiere quite courageously between a Schubert Sonata and the Schoenberg Phantasy. . . . I don't remember another piece polarizing an audience as much as this one.

Q: What's the most surprising song you've ever sung?

A: "Hey there Delilah" - a beautiful song. The surprising thing for me about singing this song was that this was the first time I tried to sing something and accompany myself on the guitar at the same time!

Q: Madonna or Green Day?

A: Sorry, neither of the two.

Q: Can you dance or do you stand on the sideline?

A: I don't think I have a lot of talent to dance, so I prefer to stand on the sideline and watch others do it better!

Q: Are you married or single? A: I am not married.

Q: Because you're young and attractive, have you ever been asked to pose for publicity photos in a way that made you uncomfortable? What did you do?

A: No. I wouldn't do anything that made me uncomfortable.

Q: Any superstitions before you play?

A: No. The only thing that helps before going onstage is to practice beforehand!

Q: Have you ever used beta blockers?

A: No.

Q: Do you think Roger Clemens did steroids?

A: Who is Roger Clemens???? :-) A bit kidding. But I could definitely tell you more about [German soccer clubs] Hertha or Borussia. Metzelder rocks! And he even plays the clarinet.

Q: Are there things you won't do - but wish you could - because you don't want to risk injury? Basketball? Arm wrestling? One-handed pushups?

A: I don't do any of these above mentioned. But I probably wouldn't like to do them even if I wasn't playing the violin. I remember, though, that as a kid I was told by my violin teacher to not go skiing or ice-skating, and now I still don't know how to ski or skate! And if I now travel to places like Utah or Switzerland with beautiful snowy mountains, I wish I knew how to ski. But picking it up now would probably be really risky.

Viviane Hagner

theStrad

VOICE OF THE STRING MUSIC WORLD SINCE 1890

January 2013

JOST TiefenRausch¹,
CocoonSymphony
Viviane Hagner (violin)¹
Essen Philharmonic
Orchestra/Christian Jost
CAPRICCIO 21ST-CENTURY PORTRAITS 5118

**Rapture and sultriness lie
side by side in a modern
German concerto**



German violinist
Viviane Hagner
gives a deeply
committed,
dramatic

account of her compatriot
Christian Jost's violin concerto
TiefenRausch (1997) on this
portrait disc of the
accomplished Berlin-based
composer. Jost translates the
title as 'Rapture of the Deep'
in his informative booklet
notes, and there's certainly
plenty of exultation in the
single-movement piece,
alongside frenetic activity,
sultry jazziness and banshee-
like wailing. Hagner is utterly
convincing in all the piece's
varied moods, almost taking
on the role of a central
character in a vivid musical
drama, with the orchestra – the
Essen Philharmonic giving a
colourful account under the
composer's baton – painting
evocative backdrops for her
passionate, strongly projected
solo line. What are most
impressive, though, are her
simple, unshowy directness
and the potent emotional
power she brings to even the
simplest of phrases.

The orchestra is equally
impressive in the astonishing
sound worlds of Jost's
CocoonSymphony, and although
both recordings are taken from
live performances, you'd hardly
know it from the disc's bright,
clear sound and almost total
lack of extraneous noise.

DAVID KETTLE

Viviane Hagner



January 1, 2010

THE TOP CLASSICAL CDs OF 2009

Unsuik Chin: "Rocana/Violin Concerto" (Analekta): The Korean composer creates force-fields that well up and swirl, coalescing as moving sculpture or as waves of ghosts that eerily bombard the listener in "Rocana," which is Sanskrit for "room of light." The premiere recording of the Violin Concerto is even more evocative. Once a student of the late Gyorgy Ligeti, Chin is a masterful orchestral colorist and sound shaper whose concerto travels through fantastic worlds — with two superb guides here, violinist Viviane Hagner and conductor Kent Nagano, who leads the Montreal Symphony Orchestra.



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Viviane Hagner

BBC
music
MAGAZINE

Christmas 2009



UNSU K CHIN

Rocana; Violin Concerto

Viviane Hagner (violin);

Montreal SO/Kent Nagano

Analekta AN 2 9944 48:05 mins

Available Arkivmusic.com/bbcmusic

UnsuK Chin has established a significant international reputation over the past decade or so. She grew up in Korea, but has lived in Germany for more than 20 years; the influence of her teacher Ligeti is apparent not so much in any tangible sonic way, but through her non-doctrinaire approach to composing.

These two works, captured live, provide an excellent introduction to her music. *Rocana* literally means 'room of light' and the orchestra reflects, refracts and distorts its material as if the sound is sent through combinations of prisms and mirrors. It is intended, and manages, to be a scintillating work, while not being the least bit showy.

The Violin Concerto hit the headlines in 2004 when it won for Chin the Grawemeyer Award. With musings around the instrument's four strings providing the starting point to the first three of the four movements, there is a clear unity around which more unusual textures can circulate. It is not as startlingly original as the more recent Cello Concerto, but it is an absorbing and enjoyable work. Viviane Hagner captures its mixture of unpredictable lyricism and rhythmic incisiveness well, and Kent Nagano and his Montreal forces are committed advocates in both works.

Christopher Dingle

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Viviane Hagner

GRAMOPHONE

November 2009

Reviews | North America

Unsk Chin

Violin Concerto^a. Rocaná

^aViviane Hagner *vm* Montreal Symphony Orchestra
/ Kent Nagano

Analekta © AN29944 (48' • DDD)

**Compelling playing in this Grawemeyer
Award-winning Violin Concerto**



Unsk Chin's Violin Concerto begins like a musical centrifuge. The violin slowly starts churning with large intervallic leaps from a common tone until it spins wildly into a frenzy. The opening also references tuning the instrument, and what might be considered a second theme returns to that aspect in the first movement and elsewhere. Indeed, soon the piece is on a journey of sonic and motivic dialogue between the violin and orchestra, including a prominent percussion section, *in toto* comprising one of the more intriguing and compelling works for violin in the past decade. The University of Louisville agrees, bestowing its lucrative Grawemeyer Award on the Korean composer in 2004 for the work.

This is the premiere recording with the same performer in Viviane Hagner, and conductor in

**'The Violin Concerto
alone would establish Chin
as a major voice in
composition today'**

Kent Nagano, as performed it at the premiere in Berlin in 2001 and they clearly have a feel for it. This is most clearly seen in the pacing of Nagano, who patiently lets the piece develop, and in Hagner's ability to toss off some difficult playing without it seeming so. The Montreal Symphony plays on the edge of its collective seat here, with a remarkable mix of precision and warmth.

The Violin Concerto alone would establish Chin as a major voice in composition today, but she has many other scores to her credit. One of the latest is *Rocaná*, co-commissioned by the Montreal Symphony and several other world institutions (including the Seoul PO). While it bursts with complex writing, it is less innovative than her Violin Concerto – more along the postmodern avoidance of theme and obvious structure in the favour of sonic outbursts from various sections of the orchestra and uncoordinated layering. The sound generated by the orchestra is again brilliant under Nagano, even if the score's random-sounding surfaces didn't catch my ear on repeated listenings.

Andrew Druckenbrod

Viviane Hagner

AUDIOPHILE AUDITION

web magazine for music, audio & home theater

Publishing More Hi-Res Disc Reviews Than Any Other Publication!

May 9, 2010

The Romantic Violin Concerto, Vol. 8 = VIEUXTEMPS: Violin Concerto No. 5 in A Minor, Op. 37; Violin Concerto No. 4 in D Minor, Op. 31; Fantasia appassionata in G Minor, Op. 35 - Viviane Hagner, violin/Royal Flemish Philharmonic/Martyn Brabbins - Hyperion

A brilliant collation of Vieuxtemps violin works, in which every conceivable bravura device confronts the undaunted Ms. Hagner.

by Gary Lemco

It was Jascha Heifetz who first brought our attention to the refined beauty of the *A Minor Concerto* (1859) of Belgian composer Henri Vieuxtemps, an essentially one-movement work that subdivides into three sections, the second of which, *Adagio*, adapts an affecting melody from Gretry's opera *Lucille*. Munich-born virtuoso Viviane Hagner (rec. 8-10 July 2009) brings a splendid sense of the romantic style to this work, playing a 1717 Sasserno Stradivarius of sweetly brilliant tone. The performance becomes quite fiery and flamboyant, Hagner's trills and runs striking a wonderful balance between poetry--in the C Major second subject--and ensuing fireworks. The extended cadenza employs double stops and polyphony to advance the themes of the first movement, soon to modulate into the *Adagio* and *Allegro con fuoco* finale, a relatively effusive coda than any sort of independent movement, but tailor made for the high-minded virtuosity Hagner projects, much in the Heifetz mold.

The *Violin Concerto No. 4* (1847)--championed by both Francescatti and Menuhin--was composed while

Vieuxtemps was court violinist in St. Petersburg, Russia. The scale of the piece suggests a symphonie concertante in the manner of Berlioz's *Harold in Italy*. The orchestra delays the entry of the solo violin, first establishing a hazy *Andante* that rather echoes the chorale mystique of Spohr's *Song-Scene Concerto in A Minor*. Hagner's entry has all of the solemnity of the opening of the Bruch *G Minor Concerto*, the violin moving between arioso and recitativo passages. When the virtuosic material dominates, Hagner must perform double, triple, and quadruple stops in order to bring off the tumultuous cadenza. Attacca to the *Adagio religioso*, another chorale statement with sweetly nostalgic tendencies. Some passionate indulgence soon reverts to lyrical outpouring, Hagner in concert with the harp, a model for Bruch's later *Scottish Fantasy*. The *Scherzo in D Minor* (and D Major trio) provides a natural showpiece in duple rhythm, rife with swooping figures and drone and hunting-horn effects in the bucolic trio.

The last movement, a rather pompous affair, is marked *Finale marziale*, the



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solo singing in high registers and any number of bravura flourishes. Those who recall the Francescatti collaboration with Ormandy on CBS (ML 5184) will wonder why no enterprising reissue acolyte has revived that classic to match this equally incendiary realization by Hagner and Brabbins.

The *Fantasia appassionata*--so many of these pieces find resonance in Bruch's catalogue--was composed in 1860. In a single movement, Vieuxtemps unleashes a cascade of pyrotechnical prowess in an amalgam of styles that demands declamatory and virtuosic execution from the ardent soloist, often in imitation of Paganini's lyrico-flamboyant style. The *Moderato* section modulates to an *arioso* G Major in a ballade that evolves in variation form.

The *Largo* offers harmonies close to Tristan Act II, the violin indulging in rhapsodic, avid gypsified musings. The last four minutes treat us to a spirited *Saltarella*, that lively rhythm of Mendelssohn's *Italian Symphony*, here a case of "kitchen-sink" music, wherein every conceivable bravura device confronts the undaunted Ms. Hagner. Did Taneyev know this piece well enough to base his Op. 28 *Concert Fantasy* last movement on its whirling-dervish figures? You be the judge. This Volume 8 of "The Romantic Violin Concerto" series is a keeper.

Viviane Hagner

bbc.co.uk

June 21, 2007



REVIEW

By Andrew McGregor

Viviane Hagner is from Munich, and she's been appearing in public in excellent international company since her teens. She's won a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award, she's been loaned a Strad, and she likes to champion new concertos by the likes of Unsuk Chin and Simon Holt...all of which ought to tell you that this is a very interesting player.

If you missed Hagner's EMI debut recording with her pianist sister, then don't make the same mistake again; not only is this new one for Altara Classic an excellent showcase for a fine young fiddle player, but it's also thoughtfully and very cleverly programmed. Three works for solo violin by **Bartok**, Karl Amadeus Hartmann, and **Bach** – the D minor Partita with the legendary Chaconne, a touchstone for violinists of all persuasions. In fact there are three Chaconnes; the **Bartok** Solo Sonata (written for Menuhin in 1944, a masterpiece that was to be **Bartok**'s last finished work) begins with a Tempo di ciaccona, that Menuhin claimed 'translated the greatest of **Bach**'s own works for solo violin...into Hungarian idiom, free but disciplined'. Hartmann's Suite No. 1 for Solo Violin is from 1927, and ends with a Chiaccona.

Hartmann adored **Bartok**'s music, and Viviane Hartmann thinks this Solo Suite is more than just a chronological link between **Bach** and **Bartok**...and she decides to end with the Bach Partita, instead of doing what many violinists (and record companies) would have done and begin with the most popular work, and the easiest sell. She tells us she wants to set off with the modern, and



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travel backwards in time, placing **Bach** in a more striking context... which in their own way is exactly what both Hartmann and **Bartok** were trying to do. The Bach sounds powerfully communicative in this context – timeless, and somehow effortlessly modern after the grittier canvases of the two 20th century composers.

Remarkable music played with real understanding, and a fine recording as well. Reward Hagner's intelligence and musicality by buying a copy, and sharing it widely...

Viviane Hagner

V A N C O U V E R
C L A S S I C A L M U S I C

January 28, 2020

THE 2020 VSO NEW MUSIC FESTIVAL FINDS RANGE AND CINEMATIC VARIETY



This year's New Music Festival happened to coincide with a (rare) snow week in the city but, fortunately, the opening and closing orchestral concerts were little affected. One interesting feature of the festival's design was the appearance of current VSO conductor Otto Tausk alongside his long-standing predecessor Bramwell Tovey: Tovey originally founded the festival in 2014. The general theme was 're-creation' and, in the first concert, German violinist Viviane Hagner and Finnish clarinetist Kari Kriiku returned, respectively, to Unsuk Chin's Violin Concerto (2001) and Kaija Saariaho's *D'om Le Vrais Sens* (2010) – works they had originally premiered. In Tovey's closing concert, it was Thomas Adès's 2017 (re)constitution of an orchestral suite from his opera *Powder Her Face* joining

hands with Max Richter's 2012 (re)composition of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*. Canadian Nicole Lizée had an outing to herself in the festival but also contributed her own (re)imagining of *The Sound of Music* in the first concert. Overall, it was an interesting combination of pieces where a cinematic component, either musical or visual, often came into play.

By far the purest piece was Unsuk Chin's Violin Concerto. The work was received with excitement from the outset – winning the Grawemeyer Award in 2004 – and survives the test of time very well. The piece broadly fits within the standard 3-movement concerto form, adding only an additional scherzo. It is a work of beauty and sensitivity and finds a natural motion from beginning to end, balancing a searching lyricism with a modernist percussive structure.

Viviane Hagner has recorded the work with the Montreal Symphony under Kent Nagano. Having lived with it for two decades, she has clearly developed great art in weaving between the orchestral strands to achieve both coherence and intensity. She does not have a particularly big tone but has a sophisticated appreciation of the variety of tones needed and varies her attack: she can muse, dance and protest with remarkable facility, and does not shy on her feelings. As affirmed here, it is the work's emotional suspension and sureness of line that make it special even though it moves through many different colours and never completely severs its ties to a historical legacy. While there are clear links to Ligeti (Chin's teacher), the soloist's use of open strings at the very beginning and throughout the first three movements seem to pay a debt to Alban Berg's concerto; the rhythmic point of the finale hints at Bartók's Violin Concerto No. 2; while suspended cells of colour come forth with a Debussy-like countenance. Hagner never lets us forget this mix of past and present, but the result she presents stands triumphantly on its own. The way the tender, searching strands of her opening violin whispers reappear at the work's end achieves a wonderful feeling of classical symmetry. Otto Tausk and the orchestra were most attentive compatriots.



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Viviane Hagner

Utah
ARTS REVIEW

September 28, 2019

Mozart and Respighi make a congenial pairing for Utah Symphony

By Edward Reichel



In some interesting and rather unusual program choices, two quite different and distinctive halves make up the whole at this weekend's Utah Symphony concert program in Abravanel Hall.

Opening the concert are two works by Mozart that are seldom performed here – the overture to his opera seria *Idomeneo* and the Sinfonia Concertante in E flat major, for violin and viola.

In Thierry Fischer's hands, the overture at Friday's performance received a dynamic, well-paced reading that underscored the stately character of the music. The playing by the rather oversized orchestra (by late 18th century standards) was crisp, decisive and rhythmically defined.

For the Sinfonia Concertante, German violinist Viviane Hagner was joined by the orchestra's principal violist, Brant Bayless. The two played intuitively and sounded as if they had been collaborating for years rather than for a single weekend, their tones perfectly integrated to produce the musical partnership of equals that is at the core of this work. Fischer mirrored that balance in his carefully shaped and nuanced accompaniment.

The Sinfonia Concertante is neither flashy nor overly serious. Its considerable charm lies in its melodicism, which Hagner and Bayless captured in their finely expressed lyricism and well-crafted phrasings. The opening movement flowed smoothly, and the interplay between the violin and viola was nuanced and subtle.

The second movement Andante was given a delicately crafted reading by both the soloists and the orchestra that emphasized the expressive tenderness that Mozart created here. And the finale was played with a light, nimble touch and flair that projected the playful nature of the music.

Viviane Hagner



February 26, 2018

Hallé Orchestra at Nottingham's Royal Concert Hall really was a classic

By William Ruff

Once it seemed as though all classical concerts followed the same pattern: overture, concerto, symphony. But it says a lot about Nottingham Classics' varied programme planning that Friday night's Hallé concert was the first time this season that this tried-and-tested formula was in evidence.

So this Classic really was a classic.

First came Mendelssohn's overture *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage* inspired by two Goethe poems. In one 'not an breath of air'; in the other 'the winds are whistling'. So it's very much a game of two halves with conductor Karina Canellakis creating the stillness of the first part as suggestively as she did the surging ship of the second. The voyage's ending (with exuberant drums and trumpets) before the serene sailing into port was handled especially well.

Viviane Hagner was the soloist in Brahms' Violin Concerto. To do justice to this pillar of the repertoire you need

passion, intelligence and flawless technique. Viviane Hagner had all three. She was expansive, serene and lyrical in the first two movements, reserving plenty of fireworks for the finale. She was assisted by some lovely playing from the Hallé, including a fine oboe solo at the start of the slow movement.

Beethoven's *4 Symphony* is sometimes not given the credit it deserves, sandwiched as it is between the mighty *Eroica* and the *5 Symphony*. But it is full of arresting ideas, particularly its magically mysterious introduction and the speed with which its rhythmic disruptions take the listener by surprise. It also has a whirlwind finale which must be as treacherous for an orchestra to perform as it is entertaining for an audience to listen to. Karina Canellakis clearly knew its pitfalls well and relished pointing up the sharp contrasts between its moods of dark tension and sunlit high spirits.

Viviane Hagner

THE IRISH TIMES

July 5, 2017

West Cork Chamber Music Festival

By Michael Dervan

...Among the other highlights of the festival's opening weekend were the beautifully-gauged reserve of the Pacifica Quartet in Shostakovich's String Quartet No 11, and the fluid contouring of Viviane Hagner in Debussy's Violin Sonata with Huw Watkins at the piano. Saturday's Young Composers' Forum was led by Donnacha Dennehy, whose approach with four composers – Emma O'Halloran, Martin Keary, Daniel McDermott and Alex Dowling – was engaging in the fullest sense of the word.

Viviane Hagner

theguardian

April 8, 2016

Tchaikovsky celebrated as avant-garde experimentalist

City Halls, Glasgow

Volkov shows little patience for the Romantic hero, eschewing the angst and self-examination for some sonic grit

By Kate Molleson

Maybe it's perverse to pair Ilan Volkov with a totem of the Romantic canon such as Tchaikovsky's Manfred Symphony, but it's fun. The conductor is best known for his ability to unflinchingly navigate the weirdest corners of the avant garde and, as principal guest conductor, his major contribution to the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra is his tenacious championing of new and experimental music. When it comes to epic Romantic heroism, he gives the impression of not having a great deal of patience for all the angst and brooding self-examination.

So it wasn't surprising that his approach was as brisk and deadpan in Manfred as it is in Michael Finnissy. What he glossed over in evocation and mystery (the Scherzo's water nymphs were terrifyingly iron-fisted; the finale was a matter-of-fact orgy), he made up for in grit and white-hot vigour: who needs scene-setting when the first movement's coda is such a sonic thrill? And

in the strangest passages, violas left hammering away at some off-kilter ostinato, he egged on the propulsive, the angular, the awkward. This Manfred was no bombastic hero portrait; it was a celebration of Tchaikovsky at his most out-there experimental.

The concert opened with a brief and brazen new work called Nightfires by the young Scottish composer Tom Harrold, in which a solo cello elbows its way out of shrieking trumpets and swaggering double basses to play a frenzied elegy. It's bold orchestral writing, confident enough to use the brightest of colours and the chunkiest of rhythms. I'd like to hear more. Viviane Hagner was the soloist in the fiendish and beautiful Violin Concerto written for her by Unsuk Chin, and she spun out its glassy, implacable lines with the kind of calm resolve and steely grace that only she could.



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Viviane Hagner

The San Diego
Union-Tribune.

January 11, 2013

S.D. Symphony off to a good start for 2013

By James Chute



The San Diego Symphony opened 2013 on a high note with a well-balanced, satisfying Masterworks program of Rossini's Overture to "La gazza ladra," Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E minor and Nielsen's Symphony No. 5 that had both adrenaline and elegance.

Sometimes it was both at once, as in principal clarinetist Sheryl's Renk's insistent, inspired solos in the Nielsen symphony. But for the most part, the Nielsen raised your pulse while the Mendelssohn earned your admiration in

Friday's Jacobs Masterworks concert in Copley Symphony Hall.

Violin soloist Viviane Hagner's thoughtful approach to the Mendelssohn, arguably the most popular violin concerto in the repertoire, could be summed up by her treatment of a single note: a high B natural, three measures before the woodwinds sound the work's tranquil second theme.

Hagner held it just a touch longer than you might expect, and as she seemed to reconsider that single note, so did we, before she quietly finished the phrase and allowed the winds to take over.



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It was through that reflective quality and an unforced virtuosity that never drew attention to itself that Hagner made this well-worn concerto her own. She took plenty of time to consider each melodic line, especially in the movement's quieter, most lyrical passages. And in her exchanges with the orchestra, such as that second theme, when she took it back from the woodwinds, she was intent upon making the transaction a dialogue rather than a drama.

Hagner's approach to the second movement Andante and the buoyant third movement Allegro molto vivace were more straight forward but no less convincing. She deserved the standing ovation much of the audience accorded her performance.

The orchestra and conductor Jahja Ling also earned their ovation for a relentless Nielsen

Symphony No. 5. Commentators can't agree on whether this piece reflects the angst of a world transformed by World War I or Nielsen's problematic but enduring marriage that survived his wife's independence and his multiple affairs. Or maybe it's something else completely.

Whatever. It's a battle royale between the forces of darkness and light, even if at times it's not clear exactly which is which (just like life).

Ling never let the tension slip in an expertly paced interpretation. He seems to relish these pieces that are brassy, over-the-top, orchestral showcases. When the ensemble, and especially the winds, responds the way they did Friday, who can blame him?

Viviane Hagner

theStrad
VOICE OF THE STRING MUSIC WORLD SINCE 1890

November 2012

CONCERTS REVIEWS

... The stratospheric contemporary works continued with Unsuk Chin's Violin Concerto, performed by **Viviane Hagner** with the Philharmonia Orchestra under Esa-Pekka Salonen (30 August). It was a well-nigh immaculate performance, technically astonishing and entirely engaging, full of fireworks but never without a profound sense of purpose. As in much music by Ligeti (with whom Chin studied), the concerto is shot through with a strange, phantasmagorical mischief, which Hagner rose to in vivid playing that ranged from a raw, rasping tone to innocent-sounding purity. She spent a lot of her time at the very top of her instrument's register, her digits sometimes dangling off the end of the fingerboard, but even in these high altitudes she had superb control of her sound. Although she was rather reserved on stage, her performance was a joy from start to finish, its ever-changing sound worlds a constant delight.

Viviane Hagner



August 31, 2012

Classical review: Philharmonia Orchestra, Usher Hall, Edinburgh

By David Kettle

The first thing to strike you was the massed battery of percussion crammed on to the back of the Usher Hall stage – all manner of xylophones, vibraphones, cowbells, tubular bells, even Caribbean steel drums and a huge thunder sheet, and all for the Unsuk Chin Violin Concerto.

But we shouldn't have worried about a sonic onslaught: it was a beautifully subtle, scintillating piece, carried off with superb charm – and a touch of theatrical bravura – by German violinist Viviane Hagner. As it rightly should be – Hagner even advised Korean-born Chin when she was writing the piece in 2001.

The concerto won contemporary music's biggest award, the Grawemeyer Prize, in 2004, and with its ebullient wit, ear-tweaking orchestral sounds and engaging sense of playfulness, you could see why.

There were a few passages where Chin's extraordinary orchestral textures simply

swamped the soloist – who spent most of her time up in the stratospheric reaches of her instrument anyway. But it was the perfect piece for conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen's vivid, dramatic approach, and the Philharmonia Orchestra responded with gloriously characterful playing.

Salonen followed it with a high-voltage, yet unhurried account of the Bruckner Fourth Symphony that positively revelled in the work's huge scale, with soaring melodies and massive, resounding climaxes that set him springing around on the podium like a man possessed.

The Philharmonia strings sounded a little thin at times, although the brass were magnificent in the glowing chorales, and Salonen ensured a sense of organic growth throughout. The monumental grandeur seemed an odd partner for Chin's fragile beauty, but there was no denying the dramatic impact of both pieces.

Viviane Hagner

The Telegraph

March 16, 2012

Philharmonia Orchestra's concert at the Festival Hall under Esa-Pekka Salonen was notable for a thrillingly clear performance of Beethoven's Eroica Symphony.

★★★★☆

By Ivan Hewett

Putting contemporary pieces next to Beethoven's mighty Eroica Symphony is always a risk. It has a thrilling sense of throwing open a door to the future, whereas contemporary music so often appears tentative, weighed down by its past, and stranded in some temporal no-man's-land.

Which is more or less how things seemed at these Philharmonia concerts. One felt the ghosts of Stockhausen and Schoenberg hovering over two of the new(ish) pieces, which were played by a chamber-sized group as part of the Philharmonia's invaluable early-evening Music of Today series.

Coup d'ailes ("Wing-flutter") by the thirtysomething Czech composer Ondrej Adamek summoned up a vision of a winged Greek god in circling cascades of brass sound, played by eight players placed around the hall. It was sharp, brilliant, and exactly the right length. Ladies' Room, an exploration of madness by Perttu Haapanen, had a brilliantly histrionic, feisty advocate, in the shape of soprano Helena Juntunen. But the piece was weighed down by the density of its allusions. Things had no time to register a real emotional impact.

The Violin Concerto by Unsuk Chin, which we heard in the main evening concert, had the opposite problem of feeling over-extended. And yet there was a delicate, ambiguous magic about the piece.

Underneath the light, bejewelled sound-world — soloist Viviane Hagner's tremulous line pirouetting high above tinkling harps and vibraphones — one felt an essentially dark and melancholic piece struggling to get out.

When after the interval the Eroica came along, it felt as if the future and a sense of possibility had been given back to us. The strength of that feeling owed much to the orchestra, who were on truly electrifying form, but most of all to conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen.

Being a composer as well as conductor, he's super-alert to the radical element in Beethoven, and completely indifferent to situating Beethoven in his musical context. By period standards this performance was all wrong. The orchestra was too big, the Funeral March so slow a real-life marcher would have tripped over.

Nor was Salonen much concerned to project the music's overt heroics. At the climactic moment in the first movement, when the trumpets blazed out, his attention was on the musically more interesting things happening in the bass. Described thus, it sounds cool and abstract. In fact the perfect clarity and lack of rhetoric made for something thrilling, honest, and surprisingly moving.

Viviane Hagner

THE PLAIN DEALER

August 1, 2011

Student partners, last-minute guest contribute to special evening with Cleveland Orchestra at Blossom

By Zachary Lewis

Next to holiday shows, pops concerts and appearances by big-name soloists, the Cleveland Orchestra's annual collaboration with the Kent/Blossom Chamber Orchestra often falls through the Blossom Festival cracks.

But that's a shame. As Saturday's edition proved once again, whatever the event lacks in flash it makes up in musical sincerity, as young artists savor the opportunity to perform alongside their professional counterparts.

Yet the sight of young and established players sharing a stage wasn't the only hook Saturday. On a nearly perfect evening, a sizable crowd also witnessed a stunning instance of one of classical music's great wild cards, the last-minute substitution.

Presiding over most of the affair was guest conductor David Zinman, music director of Switzerland's Tonhalle Orchestra, whose mostly Russian program culminated in a combined performance of Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition."

A definitive account it wasn't. On the contrary, one had the feeling of tempos mellowed to be accommodating. Best served by the combined forces were scenes such as "Bydlo" and the "Catacombs," in which weight and breadth are defining traits.

Still, there were magical moments aplenty, in the sheer sonic expanse of the "Great Gates," the doubly frolicsome air of the "Tuileries," and in the knowledge of what the experience must have meant to the



Violinist Viviane Hagner stepped in at the last moment Saturday to perform the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto with the Cleveland Orchestra.

young musicians.

Zinman also conducted the Cleveland Orchestra alone in a pair of shorter works: the Overture to Borodin's "Prince Igor" and

Stravinsky's "Scherzo a la russe." Both emerged in crisp definition, the former sounding seamlessly melodic, the latter lively and assertive.

An even bolder impression was made by violinist Viviane Hagner, who more than ably stood in for Christian Tetzlaff -- held up by travel complications -- in the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto.

Where many soloists might have been content under such conditions to simply read through the score, Hagner delivered an honest-to-goodness interpretation, and a gutsy one at that, a perfect storm of passion, power, and technical wizardry.

If anything, Hagner had a tendency to rush. But that was a peccadillo next to her unusually sweet high register and powerfully spellbinding Canzonetta. Given her performance under pressure, it may be time to move Hagner from B-list to A-list.

As per tradition, the evening began with a short pre-concert concert by the

Kent/Blossom Chamber Orchestra, a 40-piece ensemble composed of students from a summer chamber music program at Kent State University. Leading the group was Sasha Mäkilä, an assistant conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra.

In partial keeping with the night's Russian theme, the orchestra presented Prokofiev's "Classical Symphony" and Sibelius's Suite from "Kuolema."

Both could have used more vigor and greater dynamic range. But just as the Kent/Blossom partnership itself is more rewarding than meets the eye, the performances excelled in terms of shaping and emotion.

Especially strong was the Finale of the Prokofiev, treated by the young players to a reading not only proficient but distinctly zestful. It was an act of honest, all-out playing, and something special to behold.

Viviane Hagner

PITTSBURGH
TRIBUNE-REVIEW

January 29, 2011

Review: Conductor injects jolt into Symphony No. 5

By Mark Kanny

When the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra returned to classical music concerts on Friday night after an eight-week hiatus, it jumped right in with two masterpieces and a delightful, if rarely heard concerto.

Guest conductor Arild Remmereit opened the concert at Heinz Hall with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Symphony No. 40 in G minor. It is a prime example of the composer's minor key intensity, with musical textures that by turns startle and delight.

The conductor used a reduced string section — no surprise — but was smart to use four basses for really effective projection of the bottom lines. While the overall sound was not particularly transparent, he did pay attention to the wind parts and inner voices. There was an evenness to Remmereit's approach which might have benefited from some extra jolts, for example at the loud chords which start the first movement's development section. Perhaps his intention for the second movement hadn't fully settled in, because his admirably forward moving "Andante" tempo touched no emotional depth for me.

The Violin Concerto in C Major by Joseph Haydn provided an effective change of pace after the Mozart, especially with the

winsome playing of soloist Viviane Hagner. Her integrity, purity and accuracy sounded fabulous on the "Sasserno" Stradivarius violin she played. Her vibrato was more than one expects in 18th century music these days, but then Pinchas Zukerman was one of her teachers and he uses a lot of vibrato even in baroque music.

After intermission, Remmereit brought astonishing intensity to the Symphony No. 5 by Jan Sibelius. The conductor found many fresh accents and other emphases to create a highly dramatic performance. He was so caught up in the music that at one point in the first movement his baton flew from his right hand. It must have happened before because he had a spare to grab from the music stand of the first desk of second violins.

There were moments in the performance when more control would have been helpful. One such moment was near the end of the first movement. And Remmereit mistimed the final chords. But he handled the accelerando in the first movement very well. In September, Remmereit becomes music director of the Rochester Philharmonic in New York. Based on last night's concert, music lovers in Rochester have cause to be excited.

Viviane Hagner



January 22, 2011

Hugh Wolff leads CSO in 'comeback' concert

By Mary Ellyn Hutton

Friday night was not conductor Hugh Wolff's debut with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.

That was in September, 1986, when at the age of 32, Wolff led the CSO premiere of a daunting contemporary (by Gerald Levinson). He has not been back since, though he went on to a historic tenure as music director of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, leading 20 recordings in eight years, and also served as music director of the New Jersey Symphony and the Frankfurt Radio Orchestra. One of today's most distinguished conductors, he currently serves as director of orchestras and teaches conducting at the New England Conservatory in Boston.

Go figure. Still, it was like "Come back, all is forgiven" Friday, and the fact that the CSO podium will soon be empty could not have been lost on anyone.

Whether this gifted and important American conductor is a candidate for CSO music director Paavo Järvi's job or not, he led a splendid program with playing to match by the CSO. (Interestingly, Wolff was Järvi's immediate predecessor in Frankfurt.)

Guest artist was German-born violinist Viviane Hagner, 32, in an arresting performance of the Violin Concerto by Alexander Glazunov (1912). Wolff, 57, a tall, slim presence on the podium, led the Symphony No. 98 by Haydn and the Symphony No. 9 by Shostakovich. At first blush, the Viennese classicist and 20th-

century Russian might seem like a disparate pairing, but on closer inspection they fit together beautifully. Shostakovich's Ninth was deliberately neo-classic. Only 27 minutes long, it is one of the shortest of his symphonies and was meant, however obliquely, to be a jab at Soviet dictator Josef Stalin, who expected a grand ninth symphony along the lines of Beethoven's Ninth to celebrate the Russian victory over the Nazis in World War II. It has even been described as Haydnesque and as more of a chamber symphony than a full-dress symphonic work.

Haydn went first. No. 98 is one of his so-called "London" Symphonies and it had a congenial, calling-card feel which ingratiated itself with the CSO players and audience alike. Ensemble could have been tighter at the beginning, but from the Adagio (whose theme derives from "God Save the King") to the end, the performance was gracious and solid. Concertmaster Timothy Lees and harpsichordist Heather MacPhail joined in a delightful duet just before the end.

Friday was Hagner's CSO debut and her choice of Glazunov added unalloyed Russian flavor to the program (Glazunov was known as a musical conservative). She played on a 1717 Stradivarius ("Sasserno") on loan to her from the Nippon Music Foundation and she made it purr. Glazunov's Concerto is quite challenging, full of melody and technical demands, including a fully written out cadenza with finger-twisting double-

stops and polyphonic lines. She did not force her tone, and Wolff provided a sensitive, balanced accompaniment that never got in the way. There was sparkle to go around at the end, where CSO percussionists on triangle and glockenspiel added gleam to Hagner's prodigious display of fingered harmonics (produced by lightly touching the string with the finger). Conducting without a score (as he did the Haydn), Wolff found all the complexity in Shostakovich's score, from the fife-and-drum-like Allegro – a caricature of the victorious Stalin (kudos to piccoloist Joan Voorhees) – to the sorrowful slow movement, with its introspective clarinet (principal Richard Hawley) and plangent, husky strings. The real drama came in the fourth movement (Largo) where a big brass statement capped by icy suspended cymbal was twice followed by a keening bassoon solo – a soliloquy of sorts, delivered with

distinction by principal bassoonist William Winstead.

Everyone got into the game in the finale, where seeming menace was climaxed by a free-for-all. The orchestra went bonkers here, with chattering trumpets, scurrying strings and gleeful thumb-nosing all around.

The concert opened with the Air from Bach's Suite for Orchestra No. 3 and a moment of silence in tribute to CSO violist Robert Howes, who died Tuesday of cancer.

The concert repeats at 8 p.m. tonight and in an abbreviated format (without the Haydn), at 3 p.m. Sunday in Music Hall. Tickets begin at \$10. Call (513) 381-3300. Note: Wolff will conduct the National Symphony Orchestra in a concert Feb. 19 at Florence Baptist Church at Mt. Zion as part of the NSO's 2011 American Residency program.

Viviane Hagner

The Gazette

October 14, 2010

German violinist Hagner provides evening's highlight

By Wah Keung Chan

With its many thematic references to his Songs of a Wayfarer, Gustav Mahler's First Symphony is an autobiographical work that should be treated as episodes in the life of a hero, Mahler. Consequently, this work is an ideal way to celebrate the Mahler year. In an almost full house Tuesday, conductor Kent Nagano and the MSO almost got it right.

The unorthodox opening movement begins with the A note played on seven octaves marked *pianississimo*. Unfortunately, Nagano had the orchestra start a bit too loud and the movement lacked pulse until the first appearance of the promenade theme four minutes in. From there, Nagano picked up steam and intensity. However, there were still moments when the shape of the work faltered, as at the first *fortissimo*, which came too suddenly, lacking a proper crescendo buildup. This kind of awkwardness in achieving seamless transition between thematic sections plagued the entire performance.

The third movement, which invokes a funeral march and parts of Songs of a Wayfarer, seemed too restrained, contemplative and subdued, and lacked intensity. Although the orchestra overplayed the beginning *fortissimos* in the finale, Nagano soon drew clarity in the string section and produced some touching romantic passages. By the end, he had the

orchestra together for the rousing climax, earning a standing ovation.

The maestro began the concert by taking the microphone to explain eloquently in both French and English how Pierre Boulez's *Messagesquise* for solo cello and six cellos was layered like shepherd's pie. Here the four layers are "very slow," "very fast," "free tempo" and "as quickly as possible." In the ensuing performance, soloist Brian Manker made the most of the six-note motif based on the name Sacher, to whom Boulez dedicated the work. Although Nagano warned the audience not to try to decipher every Boulez idea in one listen, when all seven cellos play at the same time, the density of sound was like bees buzzing.

The highlight of the evening was German violinist Viviane Hagner's assured performance of Max Bruch's First Violin Concerto. Playing the 1717 Sasserno Stradivarius, Hagner displayed a rich and warm tone that carried well in Salle Wilfrid Pelletier; at times, Hagner appeared to lift the violin horizontally above her chin to project more sound. Her Bruch had a clear sense of line and often she varied the tempo and dynamics to add more feeling, especially in the Adagio middle movement.

Nagano offered fine support, with an impulse to the beat. In appreciation, the audience called Hagner back twice.

Viviane Hagner

St. Louis Classical Music Examiner

February 12, 2010

Two young artists make satisfying debut with the SLSO during a weekend where romance warms the heart

By Bill Townsend

St. Louis Classical Music Examiner rates this: ★★★★★



A light turnout meant there were tributaries of empty red seats Friday at Powell Hall for a concert of romantic works on this Valentine's Day weekend.

Restaurants and other intimate venues are competing with classical music on these nights when love and beautiful music are in the air. One hopes that the crowds on Saturday night and Sunday afternoon are larger than Friday's, because the fare by the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra is quite appetizing.

First on the program Friday was Tchaikovsky's "Romeo and Juliet" fantasy overture. Yes, the famous one everyone knows, but this was a more disciplined reading than the sometimes schmaltzy rendition the piece unfortunately gets.

For this happy state of musical affairs we can thank a young man, born in 1974, who is making his conducting debut with the SLSO in these three concerts: Ludovic Morlot of France.

Morlot brought out lovely string playing during the Tchaikovsky, as well as outstanding individual performances from the horns, flutes and the harp of Frances Tietov. The famous romantic melody we've

heard on countless commercials washed over us in an understated manner that was refreshing. Nothing over the top here.

Next was Mendelssohn's legendary Violin Concerto, with another youngster making a debut with the SLSO: 31-year-old German/Korean Viviane Hagner. She is stunning in appearance and fluid on her Stradivarius.

Many soloists attack the Mendelssohn concerto, whacking the notes out of the instrument. Young Hagner let the piece breathe and gave a much lighter reading than one usually hears. As with Merlot's approach in the Tchaikovsky, Hagner's take on the Mendelssohn was fresh, bright and deservedly well-received.

She had difficulty with a chin rest on her violin that wouldn't stay in place. It seemed to distract her a little as she got slightly off track at the end of the third movement, but there was so much more to love about her playing that she can be forgiven for the slippage.

As for the errant rest, she apparently snapped it off backstage between curtain calls because it wasn't on her violin when she came out for her second set of bows.

In the closing half, the orchestra, for the first time since Valentine's Day weekend

seven years ago, performed the love scene from "Romeo and Juliet" by Hector Berlioz. It doesn't have the panache that the Tchaikovsky does, which is probably why it doesn't get played much. The composer never went overboard as he conveyed the nascent love of the famous fictitious couple, and Morlot and company gave the piece its just deserts. Good, solid work by all concerned.

The evening concluded with a relative bang in comparison with the other melodic, somewhat gentler pieces.

Flute Mark Sparks had an extended solo that was simply riveting in Maurice Ravel's "Daphnis et Chloe." Sparks is a rare talent who deserves every solo shot he gets. He, harp Frances Tietov and a large orchestra including nine – count 'em – nine busy percussionists sent the small house home on a scintillating note. Ravel knows how to put on a show, and Morlot knows what to do with the score.

I know the Olympics are on TV, but that's why those nifty recording devices were invented. Record the Games, come hear the "band" if you can. A little romance from the SLSO will surely warm your heart during this snowy, cold winter.

Viviane Hagner

Chicago Tribune

December 5, 2009

Markus Stenz, CSO rise to heavenly Mahler

By John von Rhein

The news that a work stoppage at Lyric Opera has been averted following the signing of a tentative contract agreement between management and its orchestra was not the only piece of good news to emerge Thursday night. The other was the return of the gifted German conductor Markus Stenz to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Stenz, whose assured conducting of Janacek's "Katya Kabanova" is crucial to the success of Lyric's currently running production, brought comparable insights to his bracing account of a longtime CSO signature piece, Mahler's Fourth Symphony.

The maestro was elastic of line, generous of rubato, attentive to dynamic shadings. His frequent tempo adjustments were integrated into seamless paragraphs and textures alive with colorful instrumental detail. His dividing the violins across the

podium gave their dialogues extra prominence.

The playing was everywhere full of character, from concertmaster Robert Chen's impersonation of a country fiddler to the rustic chirping of the woodwinds to the joyous whoops of the horns. Nicole Cabell, the radiant soprano soloist in the final movement, described the delights of paradise with an apt sense of childlike wonderment.

The words "fresh" and "bracing" also came to mind as I listened to Viviane Hagner's reading of the Mendelssohn E-Minor Violin Concerto. The young German violinist, who was making her CSO debut, brought a sweet, pure tone and unaffected lyrical grace to the Romantic warhorse. The slow movement was notable for its poised singing line, the finale for its crisp articulation.

Viviane Hagner

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

February 13, 2010

SLSO: Good soloist; inconsistent conductor

By Sarah Bryan Miller

Friday night's Valentine-themed concert by guest conductor Ludovic Morlot and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra was an off-again, on-again affair. The first piece on the all-Romantic-all-the-time program, Peter Illitch Tchaikovsky's "Romeo and Juliet" Fantasy-Overture was totally off. The second, Felix Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E minor, was absolutely on.

Then, just when we thought we'd found, if not true love, at least a pleasant musical romance, the next piece, the Love Scene from Hector Berlioz's "Romeo et Juliette" was off. The last, Maurice Ravel's "Daphnis et Chloé" Suite No. 2, was bombastic — but on. It was an odd approach to musical romance, to say the least.

Morlot is a young conductor (born 1974) with a nicely clear beat. Unfortunately, he seemed to be completely out of sympathy with Tchaikovsky. His conducting in the Fantasy-Overture was crude and unsubtle; the effect was anti-lyrical and blocky, and the music failed to sing and soar as it should, despite the best efforts of the orchestra.

Then, after we'd braced ourselves for more of the same, he returned with soloist Viviane Hagner for a gloriously beautiful, impeccably Romantic reading of the Mendelssohn.

She's a real find: a gifted violinist with a clear, consistently lovely singing tone, fine musical intelligence and outstanding technique. She had a superb sense of the Mendelssohn's inherent passion, conveying it consistently. Her playing was a joy on every level, and she deserved the huge ovation she received from Friday's audience. It was a gorgeous performance from all concerned, in just about every respect. (It's also a good sign when a soloist is so engaged with an orchestra that she takes a seat in the audience for the concert's second half, which Hagner did.)

The second half began with the Berlioz, led by Morlot in an absolutely adequate but disappointingly (after the Mendelssohn) perfunctory manner. Happily, he seemed much more at home with "Daphnis," which had enough sweep and passion that a certain monochromatic tendency to pile it on in the big passages, resulting in some balance issues that impaired our ability to hear the strings, could be forgiven.

The orchestra was in fine form throughout. Principal flute Mark Sparks shone in his lengthy solo in "Daphnis;" the percussion section was impressive in the Ravel.



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Viviane Hagner

The New York Times

January 5, 2008

A Tribute Followed by Precision and Fire

Had it gone exactly as planned, the New York Philharmonic's concert at Avery Fisher Hall on Thursday night would have seemed a flashy, almost carefree

ALLAN
KOZINN
MUSIC
REVIEW

welcome to the new year. Along with what turned out to be a winning performance of the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto by a promising young violinist, Viviane Hagner, the program included a Mozart concerto played by the orchestra's principal hornist, Philip Myers, as well as Mendelssohn's nimble "Midsummer Night's Dream" Overture and Elgar's mammoth "Enigma" Variations.

But before settling into this energetic program, the orchestra offered a tribute to Jerome A. Ashby, its associate principal hornist and principal Wagner tuba player, who died on Dec. 26. Mr. Ashby, one of the few black musicians in the upper reaches of the American symphonic world, joined the orchestra in 1979 and spent more than half his life in it. He was 51 when he died. He also taught at the Juilliard School, the Manhattan School of Music, the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia and the Aspen Music Festival in Colorado.

Zarin Mehta, the orchestra's president and executive director, said in a brief eulogy that Mr. Ashby, during his treatment for prostate cancer, had been particularly drawn to a recording of the "Evening Prayer" from Humperdinck's "Hansel and Gretel." With Mr. Ashby's portrait projected onto a large screen over the stage, the orchestra's brass players gave a serene but emotionally intense performance of the work.

New York Philharmonic
Avery Fisher Hall

That intensity continued into the program proper. With Lorin Maazel conducting, the orchestra's woodwinds brought a hushed purity to the opening chords of the "Midsummer Night's Dream" Overture, and the strings played their rapid introductory figuration with the transparent shimmer from which this work's magic emerges.

Mendelssohn quickly abandons the whispered quality of this opening and has the orchestra play full-throttle, but Mr. Maazel was open to the work's subtleties. Even in the most ebullient passages he kept the playing trim and the timbres crystalline. Mendelssohn's alternation of delicacy and power should always sound this mercurial.

Mendelssohn wrote his Violin Concerto 18 years after this youthful overture, but parts of it — not least, the wind writing in the opening movement — were clearly drawn from the same well. Ms. Hagner approached it in that spirit but also with a sense of the greater maturity and depth Mendelssohn had gained. She brought an appealing flexibility to the solo line, as well as focused intonation and a sound that was consistently large and projected well without seeming weighty or excessively sugared.

Her reading of the Andante was a picture of melting beauty, and in the fast outer movements she played with the kind of virtuosity that makes things sound easier than they are.

Mr. Myers was at his best as well. After the intermission he of-



ferred a rich, virtually flawless rendering of Mozart's E flat Concerto (K. 417). If there was cause for complaint, it was in the balances: at times — and not only when the horn had the most interesting music — Mr. Myers overpowered the orchestra.

Mr. Maazel closed the concert with the "Enigma" Variations, finding an invitation to abandon the subtlety he had brought to the Mendelssohn and Mozart works. You can't blame him entirely: Elgar has the orchestra playing at extremes, with elegant, refined variations offset by others that draw on all the late-

Romantic grandeur an orchestra can produce. Mr. Maazel revels in high-contrast works like this, and he tends to push their limits, making the more poetic sections mawkish and rendering the most vivid passages in bright, garish hues.

That said, he can draw a thrilling sound from his players, which in this case meant magnificent brass work and lustrous string playing. Cognitive dissonance doesn't come any clearer than this: You have to admire the precision and fire Mr. Maazel gets from the orchestra even as you wince at his exaggerations.

Viviane Hagner

The Boston Globe

February 8, 2008

The symphony that gives a hall its voice back

By Jeremy Eichler



Charles Dutoit conducts violinist Viviane Hagner, making her debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, in Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 1 at Symphony Hall last night. (Michael J. Lutch)

The beautiful organ at Symphony Hall has a way of hiding right there in plain view. It lies dormant through weeks of Boston Symphony Orchestra programs, becoming

just another part of the hall's architecture rather than its majestic voice box. This week, architecture gets articulate; the hall is speaking back. The vehicle is Saint-Saens's

"Organ" Symphony, a work deeply inscribed in the BSO's collective memory. The organist is James David Christie, who handles it marvelously. The conductor is Charles Dutoit, who last night led a memorable reading with plenty of heft and sweep, but ultimately placing the virtues of color, gentle warmth, and lyricism over those of brute force.

In an admirable stroke of programming, Dutoit opened the evening with the "Petite Symphonie Concertante" by the Swiss composer Frank Martin (1890-1974). Even as his best-known work, it is still a rarity on concert programs. It calls for a virtual family reunion of strings: All of the usual varieties, divided into two orchestras, plus solo harp, harpsichord, and piano. The writing is impeccably clear, the harmonies chaste and open, the surfaces taut, yet beneath this music's smooth façade darker currents linger. Drama is intuited more than seen or heard. Much of the piece's distinctive sound world comes from its unusual combination of soloists. Last night's fine players - Ann Hobson Pilot (harp), Mark Kroll (harpsichord), and Randall Hodgkinson (piano) - brought out this music's graceful flow and elegant sense of gesture.

Between the Martin and the Saint-Saens came Prokofiev's First Violin Concerto, with the talented young German violinist Viviane Hagner making her BSO debut. Her playing is distinguished by its generous tone and extremely fluid technique. There were plenty of moments when she keenly fastened onto the work's sardonic bite, its sincere lyricism, its brilliant impetuosity, but the deeper fire and ice at this music's core remained largely unrevealed. Dutoit had the orchestra playing with an uncommon subtlety that Hagner did not always match.

Not too long ago, Symphony Hall's organ was given a sorely needed two-year renovation, coming back to life in the fall of 2004. It now sounds glorious, especially in the context of the "Organ" Symphony

(No. 3). Saint-Saens delays its entrance for several minutes into the first movement, and when it arrives, it does so not with heaven-rending chords but with a soft bed of tone laid down for a theme gently unspooled by the strings.

Dutoit's conducting was broad and spacious. The orchestra played with tremendous force when called for in the finale, and with a burnished sound and warm glow throughout.

Viviane Hagner

The New York Times

February 2, 2008

Sober Bartok With a Swirling Finale



Big ideas in music gravitate toward big sounds. Well used, a single instrument does even better. Viviane Hagner's violin recital with the pianist Tatiana Goncharova at the 92nd Street Y on Thursday was mostly Brahms but mainly about Bartok's Sonata for Solo Violin. It is a singular piece in more ways than one.

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HOLLAND**
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Bartok wrote its four movements in waning health, in the United States, alongside the Concerto for Orchestra, his great ode to symphonic luxury. It is nice to fantasize a composer at work going back and forth between the two, seeking relief from the opulence of one in the pared-down sounds of the other, and vice versa. Bartok died the next year, in 1945.

The sonata's opening is a grand statement: public declamation filled with color and exclamation points. The fugue that follows is more sober. Then comes the "Melodia"; if a lovelier, more touching piece of linear writing exists in 20th-century music, I don't know it. At the end is one of Bartok's swirling finales, like fog traveling at hurricane speeds.

Brahms was good at destroying music he did not want remembered, but the C minor Scherzo at the start of this impressive evening might have escaped by hiding itself inside a hybrid sonata. Two of the movements were contributed by Schumann; the other was by Albert

Viviane Hagner
92nd Street Y

Dietrich. Brahms's pounding emphasis and military bearing are a dead giveaway.

The other Brahms consisted of the Opus 39 Waltzes and some of the Hungarian Dances, all in arrangements for violin and piano from the two-piano originals. Here Brahms is in the best of moods. The waltzes, flowing from one to the next, are a precise and literal homage to Schubert's magical eight-bar phrases written some 40 years before. The

Hungarian Dances were reworked by Joachim, who changed some notes to fit the violin.

The news on Ms. Hagner is all good. Her companion piece for the Bartok was Bach's D minor Chaconne, also for solo violin, beautifully organized and with an expressivity and naturalness that took your mind off the calm control working behind the scenes. Her sound is unusually big and filled with color and was well set off by Ms. Goncharova's fine playing. Germany seems to be the new source of young violinists. The large audience loved this one.

Viviane Hagner

The New York Times

February 18, 2008

Today, Class, We're Playing Carnegie Hall

The Manhattan School of Music created a prototypical half-way house — a graduate program in orchestral performance — intended to help gifted students make their way from school to professional life. Its curriculum has been heavy on the practical: from learning symphonic as opposed to solo repertory to understanding the psychopathology of orchestra life and even to tips on travel.

BERNARD HOLLAND

MUSIC REVIEW

Manhattan's current class came to Zankel Hall on Saturday to show its progress in a program of Vivaldi and Mozart. Pinchas Zukerman is a prominent teacher at the school, and here he played the violin and viola and conducted the Manhattan School of Music Chamber Sinfonia. The bright young German violinist Viviane Hagner joined him in Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante for violin and viola (K. 364). After intermission Mr. Zukerman conducted Mozart's "Linz" Symphony.

These are good young players. The ensemble is well tuned, reasonably together and certainly not lacking in enthusiasm. Its size was not right for the space. An orchestra of eight violins apiece in its first and second sections simply overpowered this



Pinchas Zukerman, right, conducted and played violin on Saturday; left, Viviane Hagner.

Manhattan School of Music Chamber Sinfonia Zankel Hall

smallish recital hall. The musicians' flat-out eagerness also contributed to the bluntness of sound.

Understandably, slow movements worked best by forcing less. Here, young players relaxed and allowed their natural musi-

cality to come out of hiding. Ms. Hagner and Mr. Zukerman were not the best match — she fine and precise, he bluffer and broader — but the magic of Mozart's Andante movement had its desired effect. For the same reasons the Poco Adagio of the "Linz" sang very nicely.

The best of this evening may have come at the start, in Vivaldi's B-minor Concerto for four violins, cello and strings. The mu-

sic was inventive, the energy of the playing pointed and the mood cheerful. Commentators who say Vivaldi wrote the same concerto hundreds of times should have their ears examined. Mr. Zukerman, here a violinist, was as always an exceptional instrumentalist and was joined by Amaury Coeytaux, Bela Horvath and Daniel Khalikov, all good. Elizabeth Means was the cellist.



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Viviane Hagner, violin Concerto Repertoire

BACH	Violin Concerto in A minor BWV 1041 Violin Concerto in E BWV 1042 Concerto in D minor for two violins BWV 1043
BARBER	Violin Concerto Op 14
BARTOK	Violin Concerto No 1 Violin Concerto No 2
BEETHOVEN	Violin Concerto in D Op 61 Triple Concerto for Violin, Cello and Piano in C Op 56 Romances in G major and F minor
BERG	Violin Concerto
BERNSTEIN	Serenade*
BRAHMS	Violin Concerto in D Op 77 Concerto for Violin and Cello in A minor Op 102
BRITTEN	Violin Concerto in D minor, Op 15
BRUCH	Violin Concerto in G minor Op 26 Scottish Fantasy Op 46
CARTER	Violin Concerto*
CHIN	Violin Concerto (2002)
CHAUSSON	<i>Poème</i> Op 25
DVORAK	Violin Concerto in A minor Op 53
ELGAR	Violin Concerto in B minor Op 61
GLAZUNOV	Violin Concerto in A minor Op 82
GOLDMARK	Violin Concerto in A minor Op 28
GUBAIDULINA	<i>Offertorium</i>
HARTMANN	Concerto Funebre
HILLBORG	Violin Concerto no.2
HOLT	Violin Concerto – <i>witness to a snow miracle</i> (2006)
JOST	<i>TiefenRausch</i>
KORNGOLD	Violin Concerto in D Op 35
LALO	<i>Symphonie Espagnole</i> Op 21
LIGETI	Violin Concerto*

MENDELSSOHN	Violin Concerto in E minor Op 64 Violin Concerto in D minor Op post.
MOZART	Violin Concerto No 1 in B flat K207 Violin Concerto No 2 in D K211 Violin Concerto No 3 in G K216 Violin Concerto No 4 in D K218 Violin Concerto No 5 in A K219 Sinfonia Concertante in E flat for Violin and viola K364 Rondo and Adagio
PAGANINI	Violin Concerto No 1 in D Op 6
PENDERECKI	Violin Concerto (1977)
PINTSCHER	<i>En Sourdine</i>
PROKOFIEV	Violin Concerto No 1 in D Op 19 Violin Concerto No 2 in G minor Op 63
RAVEL	<i>Tzigane</i>
SAINT-SAENS	Violin Concerto No 3 in B minor Op 61 Havanaise Op 83 Introduction and Rondo capriccioso Op 38
SARASATE	Carmen Fantasy Op 25
SCHOENBERG	Violin Concerto*
SCHUMANN	Violin Concerto in D minor
SHOSTAKOVICH	Violin Concerto Op 99
SIBELIUS	Violin Concerto in D minor Op 47
STEPHAN	Music for Violin and Orchestra*
STRAVINSKY	Violin Concerto in D
SZYMANOWSKI	Violin Concerto No 1 Op 35
TCHAIKOVSKY	Violin Concerto in D Op 35
VASKS	<i>Distant Light</i>
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS	<i>The Lark Ascending</i>
VIEUXTEMPS	Violin Concerto No 4 in D minor Op 31 Violin Concerto No 5 in A minor Op 37
VIVALDI	<i>The Four Seasons</i>
WALTON	Violin Concerto
WEILL	Concerto for Violin and Wind instruments
WIENIAWSKI	Violin Concerto No 1 in F sharp minor Op 14 Violin Concerto No 2 in D minor Op 22













