Guest Artist Recital: Ursula Oppens, piano

Thursday, November 2, 2017 - 7:30pm
Brechemin Auditorium
FREE

Ursula Oppens, piano (photo: Steve J. Sherman)

Long recognized as the leading champion of contemporary American piano music, Ursula Oppens’ original and perceptive readings of old and new have earned her a place among the elect of today’s performing musicians. She performs music by Stravinsky, Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, Carter, Corigliano, and Nancarrow in her Nov. 2 recital.

Note: Ursula Oppens also leads a master class with UW piano students on Nov. 1. Details here.

Program

Stravinsky: Sonata
Rachmaninoff: 4 Etudes from Opus 33
Scriabin: Sonata No. 2
Carter: Two Diversions
Corigliano: Winging It
Nancarrow: Two Canons for Ursula

Artist Bio: Ursula Oppens

Ursula Oppens, a legend among American pianists, is widely admired particularly for her original and perceptive readings of new music, but also for her knowing interpretations of the standard repertoire. No other artist alive today has commissioned and premiered more new works for the piano.

A prolific and critically acclaimed recording artist with five Grammy nominations, Ms. Oppens most recently released a new recording of Frederic Rzewski’s *The People United Will Never Be Defeated*, nominated for a Grammy in 2016, and *Piano Songs*, a collaboration with Meredith Monk. Earlier Grammy nominations were for *Winging It: Piano Music of John Corigliano; Oppens Plays Carter*; a recording of the complete piano works of Elliott Carter for Cedille Records (also was named a “Best of the Year” selection by *The New York Times* long-time music critic Allan Kozinn); *Piano Music of Our Time* featuring compositions by John Adams, Elliott Carter, Julius Hemphill, and Conlon Nancarrow for the Music and Arts label, and her cult classic *The People United Will Never Be Defeated*by Frederic Rzewski on Vanguard. Ms. Oppens recently added to her extensive discography by releasing a two-piano CD for Cedille Records devoted to *Visions de l’Amen* of Oliver Messiaen and Debussy’s *En blanc et noir* performed with pianist Jerome Lowenthal.

At the start 2017-18 season, Ms. Oppens will present the New York premiere of Laura Kaminsky’s *Fantasy* for solo piano at the Bargemusic Labor Day Festival celebrating women composers and musicians. She will appear at Hayden’s Ferry Chamber Music Series in Tempe, AZ, where she will be joined by pianist Jerome Lowenthal and cellist Evan Drachman, in a program inspired by William Kapell, the great American pianist killed in a plane crash in 1953 at age 31 on his way back from a concert tour of Australia. Ms. Oppens will travel to Bowling Green State University for the 7th Annual David Dubois Piano Competition to perform Mozart’s Concerto for Two Pianos with pianist Phillip Moll, as well as various two-piano selections by Schumann, Poulenc, Lutoslawski and two short new solo works by Samuel Adler. Her season concludes with engagements at Humboldt State University, University of Washington, and Oberlin Conservatory.

Highlights of last season included appearances in Bargemusic’s Masterworks series, where she performed seminal works by Elliott Carter and Alexander Scriabin, as well as in “Bag of Tails and Occasional Pieces,” a concert presented founder of Open G Records to honor the piano music of Pulitzer Prize and MacArthur Fellowship-winning composer John Harbison.

Over the years, Ms. Oppens has premiered works by such leading composers as John Adams, Luciano Berio, William Bolcom, Anthony Braxton, Elliott Carter, John Corigliano, Anthony Davis, John Harbison, Julius Hemphill, Laura Kaminsky, Tania Leon, György Ligeti, Witold Lutoslawski, Harold Meltzer, Meredith Monk, Conlon Nancarrow, Tobias Picker, Bernard

As an orchestral guest soloist, Ms. Oppens has performed with virtually all of the world's major orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the American Composers Orchestra, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), and the orchestras of Chicago, Cleveland, San Francisco, and Milwaukee. Abroad, she has appeared with such ensembles as the Berlin Symphony, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, the Deutsche Symphonie, the Scottish BBC, and the London Philharmonic Orchestras. Ms. Oppens is also an avid chamber musician and has performed with the Arditti, Cassatt, JACK, Juilliard, and Pacifica quartets, among other chamber ensembles.

Ursula Oppens joins the faculty of Mannes College, The New School, in fall 2017, and is a Distinguished Professor of Music at Brooklyn College and the CUNY Graduate Center in New York City. From 1994 through the end of the 2007-08 academic year she served as John Evans Distinguished Professor of Music at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL. In addition, Ms. Oppens has served as a juror for many international competitions, such as the Concert Artists Guild, Young Concert Artists, Young Pianists Foundation (Amsterdam), and Cincinnati Piano World Competition. Ms. Oppens lives in New York City.