

well-honed skills as a colourist”, while Raymond Chapman-Smith wrote - “...in every phrase, Sullivan’s impassioned and deeply considered approach to music is, in every way worthy of attention and devotion ... engrossing, fully engaging the listener in his concentrated and complex interpretations that sought the very essence of the music.”

In his travels around the world, Mr. Sullivan has - in chamber music – partnered, toured and recorded with American violinist Charles Castleman, with members of the Berlin, Vienna and London Philharmonic Orchestras, Munich Chamber Orchestra, Medici String Quartet, plus Australians Jane Peters, Georg Pedersen, Paul Wright, Alan Bonds and Michael Goldschlager.

Mr. Sullivan is also a distinguished and enthusiastic teacher, whose teaching positions and residencies include, Seoul Art School – Korea; Chiao Tung University – Taiwan; Hanoi Conservatory – Vietnam; The Hong Kong Institute of Education; TAFE and the Elder Conservatorium of Music – S.A.; University of Western Australia, and the W.A. Academy of Music; the Charles Darwin University; and the Victorian College of the Arts. He has also lectured and given master classes at London’s Royal Academy of Music, the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Dance, London’s Guildhall School of Music and Drama, South Carolina University, Chico University – Sacramento, and in 2003 gave his lecture-recital on Mozart’s piano works at Oxford University. Moreover, for 3 years he reviewed for the London-published *International Journal for Music Education*, which enjoys a readership of some 50 countries.

Mr. Sullivan recently returned from a concert tour of Asia, and in December, will undertake his sixth concert tour of the United States, to include his second appearance in Carnegie Hall.

Gil Sullivan is represented internationally by the Amsterdam-based *Mary Kaptein Management* – [www.marykaptein.com](http://www.marykaptein.com).

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**Monday, December 16, 2013, at 8 PM**

**Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall**

MidAmerica Productions Presents

*1204th Concert Worldwide, 971st in New York, 376th in Weill Hall*

## Gil Sullivan Piano

**MOZART**

**Sonata in F major, K.533/494**

Allegro

Andante

Rondo: Allegretto

**JULIAN COCHRAN**

**Prelude No. 7**

**Prelude No. 8**

Intermission

**JULIAN COCHRAN**

**Mazurka No. 4**

**Mazurka No. 5**

**BRAHMS**

**Sonata No. 2 in F-sharp minor, Op. 2**

Allegro non troppo, ma energico

Andante con espressione

Scherzo: Allegro

Finale: Allegro non troppo e rubato

*Please hold your applause until the end of all movements of each work.*

PLEASE TURN OFF YOUR CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES.

# Notes on the Program

## **WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART      Sonata in F major, K.533/494**

*Born January 27, 1756, in Salzburg, Austria*

*Died December 5, 1791, Vienna, Austria*

The reason behind the double Köchel number to this sonata is due to the Rondo being composed well before the first two movements, then lengthened by Mozart as he eventually married all the movements together into a complete sonata. This Rondo was completed on June 10, 1786, and—as a separate work entitled “Rondeau in F”—was published in London by Speyer.

The first two movements were composed 20 months later in 1788, and at this point, Mozart decided to add the Rondo, K.494, as the concluding movement. So as to balance this with the preceding Allegro and Andante, he composed a closing cadenza, in order to give more weight to the movement. At this time Mozart composed relatively little music; he was hugely preoccupied with the arrangement of a performance of *Don Giovanni* in Vienna, for which he wrote a few new numbers.

As this sonata has so many striking features, it must be singled out from most other Mozart piano works as truly unique. Firstly it is one of the most contrapuntal of all his keyboard works, so it is therefore not surprising that the overall textures are quite transparent, even in the Rondo of 20 months earlier. The remarkably simple opening theme of the first movement—with its curious hint of Clementi—provides a veritable feast of motivic opportunities, and on this point, Mozart leaves no stone unturned! Moreover, the movement's conversational disposition is even suggestive of chamber music, with frequent sparring between the hands. Apart from being the most freely dissonant, the Allegro is also the longest exposition of all Mozart's solo piano works.

The Andante begins with what seems to be one of Mozart's “less endowed” themes, but which surprisingly turns out to be pregnant with motivic riches galore! Throughout, Mozart adopts a process that has been termed “increasing animation,” whereby the music, without tempo changes of any kind, gradually quickens. This is achieved by shortening the note values and stretching the phrases, and Mozart similarly uses this technique to alarming effect in the first movement of his D-minor Piano Concerto. Beethoven adopted this innovative technique, which he utilized many times throughout his life, e.g., in the first movement of his fourth Piano Concerto.

The most fascinating passage of this Andante occurs almost precisely halfway through, towards the end of the development section, where persistent chromatic alterations produce strident dissonances as daring as any found in

it; he holds audiences spellbound with the music, and is an exceptional performer in every way. It was as if we had been transported to Carnegie Hall. His interpretations of Chopin, Beethoven and Liszt dazzled the audience.....a most remarkable piano concert” (Aiken Standard – South Carolina).

In Australia, critics have been equally enthusiastic - “Playing informed by brilliance of tone and accuracy ... invariably placed at the service of the music” (The Australian). “...Sullivan’s digital athleticism made a lot of noisy sparks fly with a spontaneity that is all too often lacking from live performance these days...” (The Advertiser). “Sullivan’s interpretation of Beethoven’s ‘Emperor’ concerto is one of overall directness and command....authority and flair....with sensitive rubatos and a fine tonal range” (Australian Music Maker).

In December 2007 Mr. Sullivan gave his New York debut in Carnegie Hall to a full house, which responded with a screaming & enthusiastic standing ovation. He has also given recitals in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, the Berlin Konzerthaus, the Bruges Concertgebouw, Chicago's Center for International Performance and Exhibition, New Hampshire's Claremont Opera House, Darmstadt's Orangerie (Germany), the Vietnam National Opera House, and the National Concert Halls of Thailand, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Korea. He continues to tour regularly throughout the U.S.A., Europe, the U.K., Asia, and extensively around Australia. His tour of Europe in 2009 saw performances in London, Madrid, Zurich, Spaichingen, Berlin, Vienna, Budapest, Warsaw and Prague.

Each year, he performs as both soloist and conductor - often conducting from the keyboard - with the Chamber Orchestras of Thailand, South Carolina, Adelaide, the Melbourne Pro Arte, plus the Darwin and City of Fremantle Symphony Orchestras. He has performed under conductors such as Elyakim Shapira, Wilfred Lehmann, Martin Jarvis, and his repertoire of concertos ranges widely from Mozart to Rachmaninov, Brahms to Malcolm Williamson. For CD, he has also recorded concertos by Tchaikovsky, Saint-Saëns and Schumann with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, under conductor Vladimir Ponkin.

After distinguishing himself in studies in Adelaide, he travelled to Europe for short study periods with world-renowned pianists Murray Perahia in London, and Paul Badura-Skoda in Vienna. He records and broadcasts frequently for the ABC's National FM Radio, and Hong Kong Radio 4.

In music festivals around Australia and throughout Europe in 2006, Mr. Sullivan gave a 5-program recital series performing all 20 of Mozart's piano sonatas. One of the only pianists in the world who plays the entire piano works of Mozart, he continues to research, perform and record rarely played/published works by Mozart.

In 1997, he celebrated with the rest of the music world in the centenary of the death of Johannes Brahms. Performing a 5-concert series of all-Brahms recitals - which included all 3 piano sonatas, most of the solo variations and miscellaneous works, plus chamber and 2-piano works - all 5 concerts were broadcast live over national FM radio. The critic - Roger Knight, wrote - “Throughout, the playing was marked by a singular degree of coherence, continuity and lucidity which underpinned Mr. Sullivan's

accompanied in the left hand, in its right direction! However, few would ever notice this, so deftly is Brahms' handling of these themes.

The second movement is a theme and variations based on the German Minnesang, "Mir ist leide." Like the theme and variations of the first sonata, the variations move from the minor, to the parallel major, and prepare us for the Scherzo-attacca. This second movement—orchestral in its own way—utilizes many complex layers and dense textures, even to the use of three lines at times, rather than the usual two for piano music.

Gradually sinking into the nether-regions of the piano, this movement finally comes to rest on the dominant, and the Scherzo, as if sneaking in through a back door, gives breath to its first theme, which is—note for note—directly taken from the opening theme of the preceding Andante. But the chilling atmosphere, with its breathless urgency, could not be more different, and the energy quickens. The Trio, a direct quote from that first page of the first movement, takes on a pastoral quality, reminiscent of Brahms' *Orchestral Serenades* of 5-6 years hence. A most interesting point regarding these two inner movements is that they are both in the subdominant minor of B, while the outer movements are in the tonic—F-sharp minor.

Of the four movements, the Finale is undoubtedly the most symphonic in both structure, temperament, and outward appearance. Throughout, one can sense the sound characteristics of a legion of orchestral instruments, and recognition of this is paramount to understanding this movement, which begins with a slow introduction, stating a theme which is again fashioned from the very opening subject of the first movement. The principal Allegro adopts this same theme, and Brahms thereafter wrings everything possible out of it, because there are—for the remainder of the movement—no *other* themes independent of this opening theme. As in the first movement, the second subject is a version of this theme, while it simultaneously serves as the left hand accompaniment!

The movement builds in intensity and structure, reaching a hugely powerful chromatic climax, which comes cascading downwards to a revisited, though varied, form of the slow introduction, and the sonata's timely conclusion.

## Meet Gil Sullivan

"The finest interpreter of Mozart in the world" (*Südhessen Woche* - Germany) is how European newspapers once greeted international concert pianist Gil Sullivan on a concert tour there. Their acclamations continued - "It is hard to believe that just one person could so convincingly make the piano sound like a full orchestra" (Darmstadter Echo) - "There were so many magical moments...even Brahms himself would have been impressed" [of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sonata] (Weinheimer Nachrichten). And in the United States - "Gil Sullivan's talent is breathtaking. Music you may have heard before -- perhaps many times before -- takes on new meaning and presence when he interprets

Mozart's music. Its sequential nature makes it sound even *more* relentless, in its passage through almost recklessly distant harmonies, impelling its way to a strong arrival on the dominant, which then ultimately cues in the recapitulation.

The light-hearted Finale is a truly splendid foil for the weight and complexities of its 2 predecessors, and the brilliant "new" cadenza brings such balance to the whole, that we quickly realize the composer could see the entire sonata in his mind, and simply could not leave the Rondo as it was originally published, back in 1786.

The high points of this delightful movement are the baroque, almost renaissance-like polyphony in the central episode in F minor, with its interplay of ideas in an antiphonal church style. In the "added" cadenza, Mozart includes a dazzling and inspired stretto based on the opening theme, that towers upwards in a series of multi-layered suspensions. Imbued with brilliant harmonic strokes, it thrusts us into the dominant, followed by a concerto-like flourish that ushers the music into the coda, and ultimately to its whispered conclusion.

### JULIAN COCHRAN

*Born 1974, in Cambridge, England*

Of Scottish descent, Julian Cochran immigrated to Australia in 1978. By trade, Julian today is a pure mathematician; however, at the age of fourteen, he received a scholarship to Adelaide's Elder Conservatorium for advanced piano studies. Along with his exceptional talent as a concert pianist, Cochran displayed a rare ability for greatly imaginative improvisation, creating on the fly variations and even whole new development sections within works by the great composers. Julian continued to nurture this unique skill, so often reflected in his music, which abounds in a wealth of refreshing ideas, but never loses the important sense of structure and unity.

Julian Cochran carries forward the piano traditions of Liszt, Balakirev, Ravel, and Prokofiev, where the piano, with its rich sonority, acts as a metaphor—a practical and inventive device—for the entire orchestra. Meanwhile a command of the classical tradition—the vast harmonic language, polyphony and established structural forms—provides the framework from which Julian invents fruitfully, and extends his musical language into new territories.

Julian's music frequently inhabits the realms of dance, an aesthetic that clearly spills over into his larger works, such as the Second and Third Piano Sonatas, and the orchestral work *Symphonic Tale*.

Concert pianists and students alike delight in mastering Cochran's piano works, discovering the intelligent and fascinating surprises existing within some of the most exquisite artistic piano writing of our time, and rejoicing in the refreshingly new ways in which Julian's ideas and concepts reflect on human nature.

**JULIAN COCHRAN: Preludes Nos. 7 and 8 and Mazurkas No. 4 and 5**

—Notes by Julian Cochran

I wrote the Seventh and Eighth Preludes in 2010 in succession, whilst they belong to very different worlds. The Seventh begins with a reflective and searching subject, which is itself made up from a short phrase played twice in succession; the repeat is displaced by one beat to give the illusion of a single melody. Folk-music-style variations ensue, whilst in the climax, the same rhythm from the opening is applied to the powerful cathedral-bell-like descending notes.

The Eighth Prelude seems initially restrained, yet explodes in an extroverted manner as if it cannot be repressed, and the latter stages of the piece take on a kind of Lisztian grandeur in its writing style. One can listen for notes accented in pairs appearing throughout the entire work. These accented notes are a consequence, however, of a deeper seed.

This Prelude resulted from my exploration of successions of diminished harmonies (for example C, E flat, F sharp, A) in which the melody is a semi-tone higher (in this case the A is changed to B flat) or one tone higher (the A is changed to B) than the underlying harmony and falls (resolves) back to the underlying diminished harmony (A)—once again, the seed generates the entire work.

The work carries throughout, a sense of both tranquillity and peril, in a conflicting manner, yet the two are capable of co-existence. This is the nature of the ocean, and the swirling opening subject is clearly reminiscent of this natural force.

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The Mazurka, or *Mazurek*, is related to the Waltz, but with the accent usually placed on the second or third beats, as opposed to the first beat in the Waltz. Of my five Mazurkas, simply following the typical dotted rhythms used in the folk music, and modelling the Mazurka in no other way than from the rhythm, the aesthetic tendencies will follow their own course.

My musical language upon writing the first mazurka was under the influence of my Five Romanian Dances, at that time just completed, which themselves followed from my participation in a Balalaika orchestra, so it should be of no surprise that the mazurkas tended to have a closer aesthetic relationship to the folk music of Romania than that of Poland, in the similar way Szymanowski had extended the expressive scope of the mazurka to encapsulate his own unique language. Indeed with sincere musical construction the language should not be forced, but rather, one must only work within the language that has been mastered.

My music is frequently formed by a simple seed from which I expand the one idea, like a flowering tree, to produce the entire body of the work. In Mazurka No. 4, despite having the widest stylistic variety of all my Mazurkas, I place an emphasis

upon the fourth and sixth notes of the minor scale, where the fourth note is raised and the sixth note lowered, causing the fifth note to be mockingly avoided! This one idea leads to everything—a kind of anomaly that motivates how all of the subjects are created and correspondingly relate together. The atmospheres range from great sparseness at the opening, to energetic, engine-like variations.

The first draft of my fifth Mazurka was completed in late 2009, but was greatly revised during 2010 after a small modification to the opening subject prompted the entire work to be edited, owing to its interweaving throughout the work. The piano writing, with more clockwork-like momentum required of the pianist, may remind us of Ravel, and the orchestra-like possibilities of the concert grand piano are likewise highlighted.

**JOHANNES BRAHMS Sonata No. 2 in F-sharp minor, Op. 2**

*Born May 7, 1833, in Hamburg, Germany*

*Died April 3, 1897, in Vienna, Austria*

Brahms' Second Piano Sonata in F-sharp minor is listed as his Opus 2. It was written in Hamburg in 1853, and published the following year. Despite being his second published work, it was in fact composed *before* the first piano sonata Op. 1, but *published* as Op. 2 because Brahms recognized the importance of an inaugural publication, and felt that the C-major sonata was a stronger work. It was sent, along with the latter, to Breitkopf and Härtel with a letter of recommendation from Robert Schumann, who had already praised Brahms with wild enthusiasm. The sonata—dedicated to Clara Schumann—shows clear signs of an effort to impress.

Brahms' internal working credenda is already evident in these early sonatas, composed when he was only 19-20. The audacious and muscular piano textures and techniques surprisingly forecast Liszt's only contribution the following year to the piano sonata canon. However, it is the microscopic world of motivic development, the staggering intellectual and structural rigor of these early sonatas, that Brahms elevated almost to a science, even at this mercurial age. Like every brick in a towering skyscraper, like every rivet in a grand arching bridge, so too does every note and every interval of the opening page play a hinging and embryonic roll in the large-scale construction of the entire sonata.

The “tutti” opening theme, with its heroic orchestral attitude and posture (little wonder Schumann described these two early sonatas as “veiled symphonies”), plus the quiet and suspenseful following theme, hoarsely growling deep in the bass, make up the lion's share of music for the entire sonata, and almost every idea can be traced back to these two themes.

The first movement follows in strict sonata-form, but the intervals of this quiet growling theme are employed to full advantage. For example, it becomes the second subject in reverse direction, and in the recapitulation, it is simultaneously