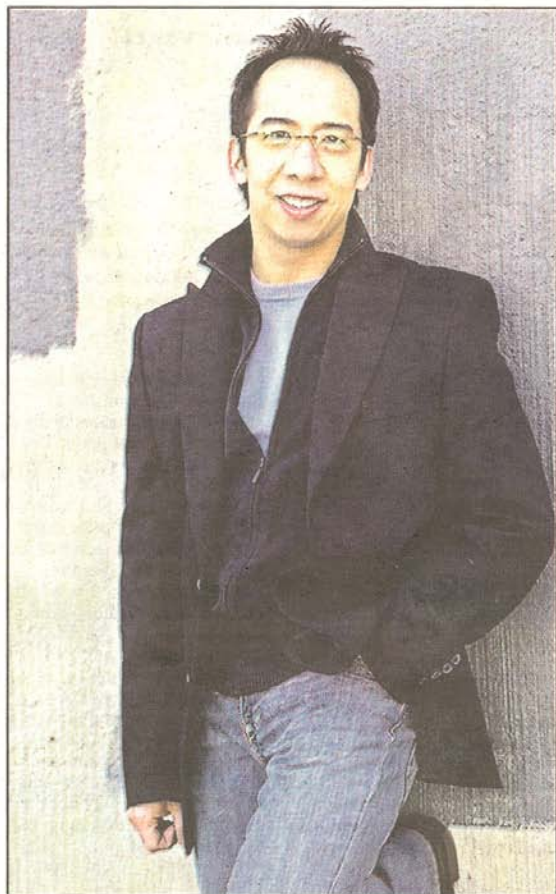


Pro Musica takes break from the Baroque



PIANIST JOEL FAN IS KNOWN AS A MEMBER OF YO-YO MA'S SILK ROAD ENSEMBLE.

BY EMILY VAN CLEVE
FOR THE JOURNAL

The magic of music by Beethoven, Bartók and Ravel is revealed during Santa Fe Pro Musica's chamber orchestra concert Sunday, Nov. 4, with special guest pianist Joel Fan. Taking a break from Baroque music, the ensemble indulges in classical, impressionistic and 20th-century works that showcase the instrumentalists' style and versatility.

Ravel's "Mother Goose" Suite, which conductor Thomas O'Connor describes as "a spectacularly successful work for chamber orchestra," opens the program. It's a series of five miniature pieces that reflect on childhood, including several based on the story of Sleeping Beauty and one based on the 17th-century tale "Petit Poucet" by Charles Perrault.

"There isn't much impressionist music written for chamber orchestra," O'Connor said. "One reason I like this particular piece is that it gives the winds some fabulous solos. With winds, percussion, harp and strings, it's a very colorful and evocative work."

The violins, violas, cellos and basses perform Bartók's 1939 piece Divertimento for String Orchestra. Unlike the upbeat, light and magical "Mother Goose" Suite, this work captures the emotional turmoil

Santa Fe Pro Musica

WHEN: 3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 4

WHERE: Lensic Performing Arts Center, 211 W. San Francisco, Santa Fe

HOW MUCH: \$15-\$60. Call (505) 988-1234, (505) 988-4640 or (800) 960-6680

experienced in Europe before World War II. It was written as a commission from Paul Sacher for the Basle Chamber Orchestra just weeks before the German invasion of Poland that ignited the war. The Divertimento was the last composition Bartók wrote in Europe before immigrating to America.

"It reflects the worry and trauma that was part of Europe at that time," said O'Connor. "That being said, it is an interesting, accessible piece with beautiful melodic lines and intricate rhythms."

Fan makes his fourth appearance with Santa Fe Pro Musica when he stars as the soloist in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4. Most people know Fan as a member of Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble, but chamber music isn't part of his current musical season.

"I've got solo recitals in Vermont, Pennsylvania, Texas and New York," he said by phone from New York. "I'm also playing a number of concertos this season. I'm not doing much chamber music right now. I'm touring with my 2006 album 'World Keys,' which is a CD of solo pieces. I hope I'll have the CD for sale at the Santa Fe Pro Musica concert."

O'Connor and Fan made a joint decision that Fan would play Beethoven's Fourth concerto, and O'Connor couldn't be happier. "It's one of my favorite concertos, and it works well with a chamber orchestra," he said.

Fan also admires this particular work. "It's so beautiful and intimate," he added. "It has a beautiful range of emotions. The way it starts, with the piano making the opening statement by itself, was groundbreaking at that time."

Like many of Beethoven's later works, the pianist is required to play the right hand melodic line in a high register and the left hand accompaniment in a much lower register.

"I see the vast distance between right and left hands as a way that Beethoven expressed emotions and the cosmic feeling experienced in his music," Fan said.