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Enrico Elisi

Pianist

Press Kit 2009

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Pianist Enrico Elisi regularly performs in Europe, America, and Asia. Recent engagements include a TV broadcast on WPSU — *Music from Penn State*, as well as recitals in Germany, Italy, Taiwan, and China. He has appeared as a soloist with several orchestras, including the Florence Symphony, Italy; Orchestra Classica do Porto, Portugal; Bay Atlantic Symphony, New Jersey; Greeley Philharmonic, Colorado; UNLV Chamber Orchestra, Nevada; and Johns Hopkins Symphony Orchestra, Maryland. In the summer of 2007, Elisi debuted as soloist/conductor, performing Mozart piano concerto K. 414, with the Green Valley Festival Chamber Orchestra. In 2009, Elisi will join the Pennsylvania Centre Orchestra, honoring Mendelssohn's 250th anniversary with a performance of the Concerto in G Minor.

He was featured as a recitalist in radio broadcasts, including WCLV Cleveland, UNC, KCVN Nevada Public Radio, and Radio Montebeni, Italy. In 2008, Via Classica (TIDE 96.0), a German radio station, hosted a two-and-a-half-hour program about Elisi, offering a broadcast of his latest recital in Hamburg (recorded live), as well as an interview.

In Italy, Elisi has won a number of first prizes in several competitions. With his versatility he has garnered top awards at such diverse venues as the Venice Competition – which brought him a performance at the famous La Fenice theatre, in Italy – and, internationally, the Oporto International Competition – which led to a broadcast with the Orchestra Classica de Porto for Portuguese national television.

An active chamber musician, Elisi has collaborated with many renowned artists, including principal players from the Chicago, Baltimore, and American Symphony orchestras, and was a member of the *Cerberus Trio* until 2004. He has also taken part in and performed at the Taos and Ravinia Festivals. Other recognized partnerships include that with Naxos recording artist, violinist Qian Zhou, with whom he toured China.

"Mr. Elisi's playing shows a refined sense of style and noble personality."

—Lazar Berman, pianist

"Mr. Elisi is an artist whose strongly individualistic playing is driven by an unusual mixture of passion and idealism."

— Robert McDonald, pianist, Juilliard School, New York

Elisi is equally at home with the standard repertoire as well as new music, encompassing an eclectic repertoire of solo and chamber music, often including rare or less frequently performed compositions. He enjoys working with living composers and has premiered several works (some of which were dedicated to him) at debut recitals in Toulouse, France; Carnegie Recital Hall, as a recipient of the La Gesse Foundation Fellowship; as well as other U.S. venues. In 2005 Elisi played chamber music by Ukrainian-born, American composer Virko Baley. In the fall of 2006, he appeared as guest artist at the 4th International Festival of Contemporary Music in Lima, Peru performing works by Peruvian composers Jorge Villavicencio Grossmann and Celso Garrido Lecca. In 2008 he premiered a chamber work by Korean composer Kye Ryung Park at the Nevada Encounters of New Music, and he was later invited to perform music by Wolfgang Rihm, in Germany. He then commissioned K. R. Park a new piano work – *Reminiscences* – which will be premiered at Penn State University shortly. In 2009, Elisi will also pay

tribute to renowned composer, award-winner, Paul Chihara, by performing a complete program of chamber works in his honor, and he will premiere a new chamber work of Jorge Grossmann, in 2010.

In Italy, the press lauded Elisi's debut as "young in years but with a wonderfully rich musicality, a solidly grounded technique, a precise touch, and an enduring respect in his approach to the great masters." The prophetic words of this critic about Elisi's approach as a performer - a philosophy of humility and respect for the work and its composer - foresaw the development of a stylistic path that legendary pianist and conductor Leon Fleisher further nurtured.

"A first-class piano recital this week. Enrico Elisi revealed remarkable sensitivity, imagination and polish. He brought clarity and subtlety to Bach, considerable eloquence to Mozart, and his phrasing of Chopin contained uncommon rhythmic elasticity and poetic refinement."

**— Tim Smith, *The Baltimore Sun*,
Music Critic**

Fleisher recognized "an awareness of those elements that distinguish the great artist from the pedestrian performer," in the young pianist and invited him to study at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University on a full scholarship, where he earned both a master's and doctoral degrees, serving as his mentor's assistant near the end of his studies in Baltimore. The learning experience gained with renown Artur Schnabel disciple Leon Fleisher (who traced his teaching lineage to Beethoven) represented a powerful, stimulating adventure for Elisi. Prior to coming to the U.S., Elisi studied in Italy and gathered diplomas from the Conservatory of Florence

and the world-renowned "Incontri col Maestro" International Piano Academy of Imola. In Imola, he worked extensively with two Russian pianists: Alexander Goldenweiser's disciple, Lazar Berman, as well as Boris Petrushansky, one of the last pupils of Heinrich Neuhaus. Elisi also worked with the exceptionally gifted German pianist Alexander Lonquich, and had the opportunity to perform in several master classes for many well-known musicians, including Murray Perahia.

Elisi is on the piano faculty at Penn State University. As a guest professor and artistic adviser, he has frequently taught at the China Academy of Arts, in Hangzhou (China). He has also formerly served on the faculty of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). Recent master classes paired with performances in the United States include University of Texas, Eastern Michigan University, Kent State University, Pittsburgh State University, St. Olaf College, University of Oregon, Lawrence University, and the Crane School of Music of New York. Internationally Elisi has given master classes and performances at the University of British Columbia, Canada; Accademia delle Marche, Italy; National Conservatory of Lima, Peru; Tainan University of Technology and Taipei National University of Arts, Taiwan. In 2007 Elisi was a featured soloist at the World Piano Pedagogy Conference, performing a joint program with Leon Fleisher.

He is the founder of the Green Valley Chamber Music Festival, an educational summer program for young pianists and string players he directed for three years. Elisi previously directed the Piano Institute of the Las Vegas Music Festival. In addition, he is active as an adjudicator of piano competitions in Canada (Tremplin International, and Concours de Musique du Canada) and the U.S. (Iowa Piano Competition).

"Elisi developed Mozart's sonata as a dramatic scene that moved from one emotional level to another. Pamina could be heard languishing; Osmin clattering in his garden; one could imagine Papageno jumping but just as quickly the scene changed to the stony guest threatening a laughing Don Giovanni. The pianist who was evidently in the middle of this drama presented the audience with such great listening pleasure."

— Wolfsburger Nachrichten 2006

Enrico Elisi was born and raised in the charming city of Bologna, Italy. He has lived in the United States since 1996, and now divides his time between his home in Pennsylvania and his residence in Italy.

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Press Summary

“Musical fireworks were presented at the end of the concert, where the hands of the pianist flew. The enthusiasm of the public was so great that they allowed the pianist his farewell only after three encores.”

-- Angelika Kannenberg, Wolfsburger Allgemeine Zeitung

"Mr. An die Musik also presented a first-class piano recital this week. Enrico Elisi [...] revealed remarkable sensitivity, imagination and polish [...]. He brought clarity and subtlety to Bach's Partita No. 6, considerable eloquence to Mozart's F Major Sonata K. 332. And his phrasing of two Mazurkas and the G minor Ballade by Chopin contained uncommon rhythmic elasticity and poetic refinement.."

-- Tim Smith, Baltimore Sun Music Critic

"The Schumann finale [of the Symphonic Etudes] was one more confirmation of Elisi's dexterity as well as his mature sensitivity. The applause surged with the last note. Elisi's debut recital in Germany was a success. It is to be hoped that we will have many more opportunities to hear and experience him."

-- Wolfsburger Nachrichten, Germany

"Elisi's playing offered a balance between a brilliant technique and a lyric singing quality of tone. A true musician, Elisi is a master of elegance, refinement and fantasy.."

-- La Nueva España, Spain

Mr. Elisi never lost a beat. He navigated the [Rachmaninov second] concerto's complexities and subtle nuances without ever descending into the mere piano pounding that heralds an inferior performer. Mr. Elisi's interpretation [...] was impeccable.

-- Cape May Star Wave

Enrico Elisi proved to be a fine player with a natural sense of drama and line. The cadenzas [to the Rachmaninov second concerto] were flawless and his stage persona was intent yet not overly intense.

-- Classical New Jersey Society Journal
