



Friday, April 12, 2002

Grand piano unveiled at benefit concert

For the past three years, pianist Flavio Varani has hosted benefit concerts at OU to help the Department of Music, Theatre and Dance raise the funds needed to purchase a concert piano. Just recently his goal was realized when an anonymous donor presented the department with a brand new Steinway concert grand piano.

Varani, a Birmingham resident and 2001 winner of the Detroit Music Foundation Award for Outstanding Classical Instrumentalist, will play the piano for the first time before an audience on Saturday, April 20, at 8 p.m. in Varner Recital Hall. However, the concert is still a benefit to help defray the costs of maintaining the piano.

Selections for the evening include R. Schumann's "Forest Scenes;" S. Prokofiev, "Sonata nr. III" (in one movement); E. Granados, "Goyescas", Quejas o La Maja y el Ruisenor and Los Requeibros; M. Ravel, "Gaspard de la Nuit;" I -Ondine; II -Le Gibet; and III -Scarbo.

Born in Sao Paulo, Varani began his distinguished piano performance career at the age of 7 as a featured soloist on Brazilian Radio and TV. Two years later, he toured with the Brazilian National Symphony Orchestra. At 13, he received a scholarship from the French Government to study with the legendary Magda Tagliaferro in France. Varani, based in Paris for seven years, was heard in concerts in the USSR and Europe.

When he was 18 years old, Varani won first prize at the "Chopin International Competition" in Majorca, Spain. He continued his education in the United States where his mentors were Rosina Lhevinne and Arthur Balsam. He received the "Harold Bauer Award" from Manhattan School of Music, "Musician of the Year" from the Michigan Foundation for the Arts and "Best Soloist of the Year" by the Brazilian Art Critic's Association.

"A pianist with a temperamental affinity for high romantic pieces and the fingers capable of playing them in grand style," says a review of Varani's piano performances in the New York Times.

Varani has performed in major music centers and festivals throughout the world including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Moscow Conservatory and Munich Gasteig. He also has been heard at numerous music festivals including the Newport Music Festival, Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Meadow Brook Festival and the Cotignac Festival in France. Among his numerous orchestral engagements have been appearances with conductors Gunther Herbig, Sir Neville Marriner, Semyon Bychkov, Lukas Foss, Georg Schmohe and Eleazar de Carvalho.

Varani returns annually to Japan as a soloist chamber musician and teacher. In 2000, he joined with principal cellist and principal violinist of the "Orchestre National de France" to form the Gallia Trio. Their successful inaugural concerts in Tokyo resulted in return engagements for 2001 in Japan, followed by a concert tour in Brazil. His recent CD of Villa Lobos piano music was designated "Outstanding Classical Recording of 1999" by the Detroit Music Foundation.

Tickets for the piano benefit are:

- \$50, which includes an invitation to a private post concert reception with Varani and listing as a sponsor of the event in the program
- \$25, which includes the afterglow
- \$6 for students with proper ID

Reservations may be made at the Varner Box Office, which is open Tuesday through Friday from noon until 3 p.m., or by calling (248) 370-3013. Tickets also will be available one hour before the performance.

SUMMARY

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