

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 24, 2020

EMV and Vancouver Chopin Society present Pianist Tomasz Ritter in Recital

*Inaugural winner of the Chopin Competition on Period Instruments
makes his Vancouver debut*

Vancouver, BC – EMV and Vancouver Chopin Society are thrilled to present ***Chopin Solo Works feat. Tomasz Ritter, 2018 Chopin Competition Winner*** on **Monday, March 23** at **7:30PM** at the **Vancouver Playhouse**. In 2018, Tomasz Ritter made history as the first winner of the 1st International Chopin Competition on Period Instruments held in Warsaw, Poland. At 23, he was the youngest in a field of 30 competitors and earned top marks from the judges in all three stages of the competition. For his Vancouver debut, this rising star will play works by Joseph Haydn, Ludwig van Beethoven, and Fryderyk Chopin.

“Participating in the Chopin Competition was an unforgettable experience for me,” explains Ritter. “For me, someone who has been fascinated with period instruments from an early age, the experience was particularly interesting. I am grateful that the competition opened for me many more possibilities of further exploring and playing historical instruments.”

Born in 1995 in Lublin, Poland, Tomasz began his studies at the Karol Lipiński Music School in 2002 under the tuition of Bożena Bechta-Krzemińska. In 2008, he became a pupil of the Karol Szymanowski No. 4 Complex of State Music Schools in Warsaw. He has since attended master classes conducted by Victor Merzhanov, Tatyana Shebanova, Ian Hobson, and others. He has also gained experience playing period instruments through his work with harpsichord maker Peter Šefl and in courses led by Alexei Lubimov, Andreas Staier, and Tobias Koch. In 2011, Tomasz also won the Arthur Rubinstein International Competition for Young Pianists. As a result of winning these two major competitions he has subsequently been hired to perform on some of the world’s most prestigious stages.

“For me, the sadness and longing inherent in Chopin's music can be expressed in one untranslatable Polish word, ‘zal’ - a conflicting mixture of melancholy, bitterness, anger and regret,” explains Ritter. “In larger scale works such as the ballades or sonatas, there is a feeling of incredible force and a palpable sense of the power of inspiration. That said, there is never any sense of brute force in Chopin’s music. No matter how dramatic it becomes, the music retains its beauty and its sense of delicacy.”

This is the third in an ongoing collaboration between EMV and the Vancouver Chopin Society to bring some of the world’s top forte pianists to Vancouver. Past artists include Tobias Koch who appeared in 2018 and Janusz Olejniczak who appeared in 2017. Both served as jury members for the 2018 Chopin Competition won by Tomasz Ritter.

By introducing the period instrument category, the Fryderyk Chopin Institute, organizer of the Chopin Competitions, has sent a clear message about the importance of reviving and understanding the 19th century instruments for which Chopin wrote. The Institute recognizes that “approximating the original colour and mechanics of the instrument the composer had at his disposal permits us to grasp the unique, specific character of Chopin’s music, with its one-of-a-kind articulation and harmonic language, in large measure lost in interpretations on contemporary instruments.” Tomasz Ritter, as the first ever winner of the Chopin Period Instrument Competition is already serving as an ambassador for the sound of these treasured historical instruments.

In addition to the pre-concert talk on stage with Tomasz Ritter at 6:45PM, there will be a special lecture by

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renowned musicologist **Benjamin Vogel** at the **Playhouse Salon** at **5:30PM**. In this lecture, entitled “Chopin’s Piano – Once and Today”, Vogel will share his wealth of knowledge on recreating the authentic sounds of Chopin’s music on period instruments. Born in 1945, Vogel holds a doctorate in musicology from the Institute of Musicology, Warsaw University, where he served as associate professor. In 1997, he became a faculty member at Lund University, Sweden, and since 2003 he was on the faculty of Szczecin University, Poland, retiring in 2011. He has written for numerous publications including *The Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*, *The Encyclopedia of Keyboard Instruments* and more. Registration for this lecture is required. Call 604.871.4450 or email info@chopinsociety.org

ABOUT EARLY MUSIC VANCOUVER (earlymusic.bc.ca)

Founded in 1970 and celebrating its 50th anniversary season in 2019-2020, Early Music Vancouver (EMV) has a long-standing international reputation for the presentation, production and study of classical and traditional repertoires using “historically informed performance practices”. Historically informed performance is based on two key aspects: the application of the stylistic and technical aspects of performance, known as performance practice; and the use of period instruments which may be reproductions of historical instruments that were in use at the time of the original composition. EMV now offers the second largest program of its type in North America, presenting and producing an average of 40- 50 concerts per year featuring internationally-renowned local, regional and guest artists. EMV has a Main Season that runs through the Fall, Winter, and Spring as well as a growing annual summer festival that was re-branded as the Vancouver Bach Festival in 2016. It also has substantial education and outreach programmes including the Baroque Orchestra Mentorship Programme and BC Scholarship Programme.

ABOUT VANCOUVER CHOPIN SOCIETY (<https://chopinsociety.org/>)

Founded in 1997, Vancouver Chopin Society aims to promote lasting and profound cultural exchanges between artists and residents of Vancouver and abroad. The society is named in honour Frédéric Chopin’s and his recognition as one of the greatest composers for the piano. Proudly affiliated with the International Federation of Chopin Societies, the organization is guided by Artistic Director Lee Kum Sing, the renowned Canadian classical pianist and famed piano pedagogue. Over more than two decades, the society has presented a long list of piano luminaries, among which Daniil Trifonov, Alexandre Tharaud, Rafal Blechacz, Nelson Goerner and Nelson Freire.

LISTING INFORMATION

EMV presents *Chopin Solo Works feat. Tomasz Ritter, 2018 Chopin Competition Winner*

Date: Monday, March 23 7:30PM at the Vancouver Playhouse

Address: Vancouver Playhouse
600 Hamilton Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 2P1

Ticket prices: From \$18

Box Office: earlymusic.bc.ca or 604-822-2697

Website: earlymusic.bc.ca

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