

Playing it up at Carnegie Hall

Classical pianist Lance Mark Wiseman of Wyncote will make his debut this weekend



Lance Mark Wiseman will perform works by Mozart, Chopin and Schubert for his Carnegie Hall debut this weekend. "I would like my name to be a household word so people will actually spend money to see me perform," Wiseman revealed.

By Mary Nestor
Correspondent

As a boy, Lance Mark Wiseman would sometimes travel with his parents to Atlantic City. There, surrounded by the carnival atmosphere of the boardwalk and its grand hotels, he would search out a piano and often give impromptu recitals for whomever was nearby.

"I would sit down at the piano and start to play, and little by little the room would fill with people," he said.

This Saturday night Wiseman will make his New York debut at Carnegie Hall.

A graduate of the Juilliard School of Music in New York, Wiseman has toured the world performing for heads of state in Japan, Germany, England, Greece and France.

"It's been a long road to New York," said his father, Lance Wiseman Sr. "It's like they say. If you don't make it in New York, you haven't really made it."

He was told by his son years ago, "It has to be New York, and it has to be Carnegie Hall." He described his son's ability as "a bolt out of the blue. I don't know where it came from. We always had a piano in our home but that's it."

The younger Wiseman began playing when he was five, quickly outgrowing his neighborhood piano teacher. He then studied classical piano with Eleanor Sokoloff at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia and with Florenza Decimo Levengood as a student at the Philadelphia Music Academy, before it became the University of the Arts.

Wiseman said he tries to stay close to the inspiration that first motivated him. "I've always trusted my natural instincts and my intuitions and let my creativity run free."

He said his parents never had to encourage him to practice. In fact, it

was quite the opposite. "When I was a child I would spend six or seven hours a day practicing. My parents had to come drag me away at dinner-time."

Wiseman still devotes himself almost entirely to his art. He is a bachelor and has no plans to have children of his own. "I like children but to have children of my own ... no."

His greatest joy is performing for a live audience. "I hear my deepest innermost emotions when I play and I like to share those emotions with an audience."

Last year, Wiseman traveled to Japan to perform for then Prince Akihito who has since become emperor.

The piano Wiseman plays is one of the finest in the world. Boesendorfer pianos are made by hand in Austria and produced at about the rate of 12 per year, according to his father.

Wiseman described his piano by the sound it is capable of producing. "It's absolutely magnificent. It's a ruby or an emerald. It sounds like a human voice in the upper register."

As a pianist, Wiseman can only play with an orchestra at the invitation of the conductor. He would like to be invited to play with the Philadelphia Orchestra, which is now under the direction of Wolfgang Sawallish.

Wiseman's Carnegie Hall performance will feature works by Franz Schubert, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Frederic Chopin.

Someday Wiseman hopes to be among the very top of his profession. "I would like my name to be a household word so people will actually spend the money to see me perform," he said. "People harbor a delusion that there were times in the past when classical music was more popular, and it's not true. In Mozart's time, the royal court and the rich people were the only ones who got to listen to it."

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