

Inside the Piano with EUGENE ALBULESCU

A summary

“...as evident from his interview elsewhere in this issue, Romanian-born Eugene Albulescu is an educator with strong ideas about how to reach young listeners...” *Fanfare Magazine*

This program encompasses music from different periods, designed to awaken in students the sense of history, technological advances and creativity, and the unique way these are inter-connected in the works of composers. The program is deliberately flexible, allowing the works to be changed according to both acoustics, audiences, as well as the condition of the instruments schools have.

1. Either sonatas by Scarlatti or Preludes and Fugues, or Suite Dances by J.S. Bach, will feature the way in which these composers have been either constricted by the limitations of the harpsichord and its mechanism. The examples will also illustrate the ways in which these composers have attempted to manipulate sound and texture to get past the instrument's limitations (such as dynamics, decay, etc.).
2. Cristofori's invention of the "hammer" as applied to the harpsichord is introduced, with vivid examples, featuring either a movement from a Beethoven or a Haydn Sonata. The vivid explosiveness of loud and soft (when compared with the Harpsichord idioms just heard) will show students how much these composers were able to express of themselves, through this more advanced technological device.
3. One Romantic work will focus on the piano's newly developed "double escapement" mechanism (a sort of "Pentium"-like feature of pianos), and how it increased the speed of execution, and hence the speed of musical compositions, and the range of emotions they were able to portray. This will be exemplified either through the music of Liszt, Chopin or Rachmaninov.
4. The recital also poses the contemporary question of how to work with the technological devices (musical or not) which we have available at our disposal today, in order to be able to express ourselves in a fuller way. The musical illustration is Albulescu's own work "Ode", composed on, and affected by the sounds coming out of a brand new instrument, a 9-foot Steinway which Eugene inaugurated at Lehigh University, where he teaches on the music faculty.

