

Per Enflo to return to Chagrin Series for Mozart concertos on January 21

by Daniel Hathaway



Most of us feel fortunate if we can make a dent in a single professional career. Thus it's inspiring that Per Enflo has distinguished himself both as a theoretical mathematician and a concert pianist. His interest in those parallel but distinct disciplines dates from his childhood in Sweden, where he first showed an aptitude for mathematics and played his first full recital on a professional concert series at the age of 11.

As a mathematician, Enflo has cracked several seemingly unsolvable problems in functional analysis while teaching at Berkeley, Stanford, the École Polytechnique in Paris, and the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm. In 1989, he was appointed one of three "University Professors" at Kent State. In addition to teaching mathematics, he also worked on such cross-disciplinary issues as the zebra mussel invasion and the phosphorus loading of Lake Erie, anthropology and human evolution, and acoustics and noise reduction. Upon retirement in 2012, he moved back to Sweden, but still makes regular appearances in the States.

This weekend, Enflo will return to Northeast Ohio to play Mozart's 17th and 21st Concertos with the Cleveland Virtuosi on the Chagrin Concert Series at Valley Lutheran Church in Chagrin Falls. The free 3:00 pm concert on Sunday, January 21 will be led by Enflo's frequent collaborator, violinist and series artistic director Hristo Popov.

I recently spoke with Per Enflo in a telephone conversation from his home in Östervåla near Uppsala and began by asking him how he spends his time these days.

“I get up early and do some keyboard exercises for half an hour or so, then I have all day to spend with my music,” he said. The pianist has some terrific conditions to work under. “My home is the former yard of the Home Guard Society’s soldiers, and the assembly hall is an excellent room for concerts and recordings.”

Enflo recently had the satisfying experience of picking out a new piano for the space (watch a short video [here](#)). “I chose a Bösendorfer at the company’s factory in Wiener Neustadt,” he said. “We were thinking about a 9-foot instrument, but that was just too big for chamber music. I settled on a model 225 with its extra bass octave. I’m now enjoying the pleasure of daily sessions at the piano.”



Although Enflo has an extensive repertory of concertos by all the usual suspects, Mozart’s are a particular interest of his. “I have recorded a number of them with the Sofia Sinfonietta under Svilen Simeonov (left), and Nos. 17, 21, 22, and 27 have been released by Naxos,” he said. That Bulgarian orchestra was also instrumental in introducing the pianist to Bulgarian native Hristo Popov, with whom he

has toured and recorded since 2002.

Why did Enflo choose Mozart Nos. 17 and 21 for the Chagrin Falls program? “They fit together nicely, and 17 is relatively short.” Does the pianist think that No. 21 is still closely linked with the score to the 1967 Swedish film *Elvira Madigan*? “Probably less and less,” he said, “because the film isn’t so well known anymore.”

The pianist will play a second performance of the 21st Concerto on the Mostly Mozart series at St. John’s Church in Columbus on January 26 with the Triune Concert Orchestra conducted by May Schwarz. And Chicago audiences can look forward to a Chopin and Brahms recital by Hristo Popov and Per Enflo at St. James Cathedral on April 8.

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