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Marc-André Hamelin: A Celebrity superlative

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Pianist Marc-André Hamelin's next appearances are joint ventures: a two-piano recital with Emanuel Ax at Symphony Hall on April 13, and a return to Jordan Hall on May 2 with violinist Anthony Marwood and clarinetist Martin Fröst. All three programs were planned and conceived by Hamelin. Courtesy Photo/Fran Kaufman



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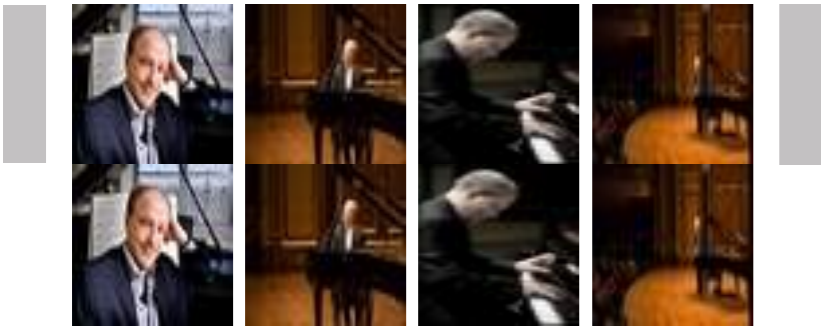


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By Keith Powers
Wicked Local Arts correspondent
 Posted Apr. 9, 2014 @ 4:10 pm

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Despite what he says, pianist Marc-André Hamelin is not a regular guy.

Regular guys do not substitute on three hours notice for Peter Serkin.

Regular guys do not have four artistic residencies at the same time.

Regular guys are not in constant demand in Europe and North America for their mastery not only of standard piano repertory, but rarely performed works by composers like Medtner, Alkan and Dukas.

And, regular guys do not curate three Celebrity Series performances in a single year.

And so when he insists affably, "I'm just a regular guy," over coffee in Boston between trips back and forth to Europe where he's on tour with the Montreal Symphony, the facts seem to argue otherwise.

Hamelin, despite his international schedule, is regularly sighted on the Boston area music scene. He and his wife, WGBH radio host Cathy Fuller, have just moved to Waltham from their longtime residence in Newton. His Celebrity Series appearances this season, part of the

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organization's super-sized 75th anniversary celebration, kicked off with a solo recital in December at Jordan Hall.

His next appearances are joint ventures: a two-piano recital with Emanuel Ax at Symphony Hall on April 13, and a return to Jordan Hall on May 2 with violinist Anthony Marwood and clarinetist Martin Fröst. All three programs were planned and conceived by Hamelin.

"They told me to think big," Hamelin says of the original Celebrity Series invitation, "and so I did.

They gave me carte blanche. It's an important anniversary for Celebrity Series, commemorating their founder Aaron Richmond, and they wanted some special events for the occasion.

"I was absolutely delighted to get Manny Ax to agree to a duo recital," he says. "We've become friends, but we've never played together. I've been playing the solo Brahms F minor sonata, and I'll do that, and I felt sure that Manny had played the other F minor, the duo sonata. There's no way that it could be anything but a thrilling experience to play with him."

Hamelin has performed with his trio partners, Marwood and Fröst, performing the same program of Schubert, Debussy, Stravinsky, Poulenc and Bartok in Europe earlier this year.

"We played this concert several times, most recently in Wigmore Hall in London," Hamelin says, "which was an almost perfect setting. Anthony has been in Boston (in 2011, with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, performing Thomas Adès' violin concerto), but if people haven't heard Martin play yet, they will. He has a tremendous career in Europe, he absolutely owns the Copland concerto, and his Mozart is exquisite.

"Being with people who totally agree with you musically, with whom you can go onstage and just be, or do, what you want to do," he says, "I really can't wait for that."

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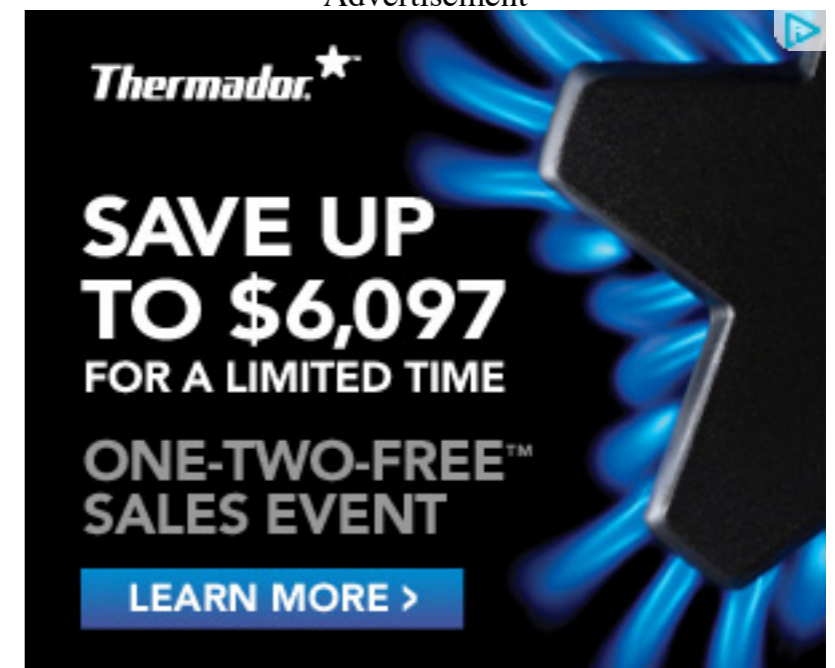


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