



Spring 4-24-1995

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Recommended Citation

Aaron, Bob, "Pianist Craig Johnson to Perform in Recital at Illinois Wesleyan" (1995). *News and Events*. 6360.

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April 24, 1995

Contact: Bob Aaron, 309/556-3181

*New Music Café, May 4***Pianist Craig Johnson to Perform in Recital at Illinois Wesleyan**

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--Pianist-conductor Craig Johnson will perform a guest recital at Illinois Wesleyan University, May 4, at 7:30 p.m. in Westbrook Auditorium, Presser Hall.

Johnson's recital, part of the New Music Café series presented by IWU Assistant Professor of Music David Vayo, is free and open to the public.

Vayo's piano composition, "Study in Carmine and Coral," will be among seven pieces Johnson will perform.

Johnson, who lives in Minneapolis, specializes in recent and 20th century music. He is a pianist, conductor, and double bassist.

Johnson's biography observes that he "seeks to present important, new and neglected works to the public through performance and discussion, to present a view of recent American art music that audiences can ultimately embrace and understand."

In addition to Vayo's piece, the recital program will contain these works:

- "Path to Twilight" by Rossi.
- "Omaggio di Cristoforo Colombo" by Bergman.
- "Klavier Variationen" by Eisler.
- "Spiral Dances" by Carl.
- "Widdershins" by Shatin.
- "Music for Piano Solo III" by Grundstrom.

In a letter to Vayo, Johnson outlined the program, observing: "Erik Bergman (b. 1911) is a leading Finnish composer; the 'Omaggio' was written in 1991. Bergman has been interested in east Asian and percussive effects, which come into play in a fascinating way in the meeting of European and American cultures in 1492. Grundstrom is a New York composer whose 'Music for Piano Solo III' placed second in the keyboard division of the 1994 Composer's Guild contest in Salt Lake City . . . its somewhat lighter character

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may offer the listener contrast and variety in my rather heavy program."

Johnson has played recent piano recitals in St. Paul, Minn., and in Hannover, Hildesheim, and Templin Germany. His 1995-96 recital schedule will take him to Illinois, Connecticut, Minnesota, and overseas. A continuing interest of Johnson's is development of a series of programs centered around the German composer Hanns Eisler.

Johnson's career has included service as resident conductor of the Rome Festival in Italy, director of stage music and assistant conductor at the Städtischen Bühnen Osnabrück, and as a coach in Braunschweig and Bremen.

He has conducted the Florida Symphony, Jacksonville Symphony, Metropolitan Symphony, North Star Opera, and other orchestras and theatre productions in the United States.

As a pianist, Johnson has accompanied numerous vocal recitals throughout the Midwest and in New York.

He was principal double bassist of the Florida Symphony for four seasons and has played double bass with several other professional orchestras.

Johnson is a graduate of Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., and the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. He has studied at the Mozarteum Hochschule für Musik in Salzburg, Dartmouth College, the Aspen Music Festival, and the Domaine Conducting School.

Editor's Note: For more information, Craig Johnson can be reached at 612/378-2381. Westbrook Auditorium, Presser Hall is located at 303 E. University St., Bloomington.