

## The Belmont Trio

Maxine Neuman (Cello), Karin Scholz and Peter Ernst (Guitars) first joined forces in 2000 on short notice to record Sergei Rachmaninoff's famous Vocalise. That spontaneous project has since evolved into a regularly concertizing chamber ensemble, performing in Europe and the USA.

These three outstanding musicians have founded a truly exceptional and unique ensemble. Their debut CD, released this year on *Thorofon Classics* - including works from Bach to Piazzolla - is an irrepressible showcase of their talents.

Cellist **Maxine Neuman's** solo and chamber music career spans North America, South America, Europe and Japan. A grant recipient from the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations and the National Endowment for the Arts and a three-time Grammy Award winner, her biography appears in "Who's Who in the World." She is a founding member of the Claremont Duo, the Crescent String Quartet, the Vermont Cello Quartet, and the Walden Trio, groups with which she has traveled and recorded extensively.

Her long list of recording credits includes Deutsche Grammophon, Columbia, Angel, EMI, Nonesuch, Biddulph, CRI, Orion, Leonarda, Argo, Opus One, SONY/Virgin, AMC, Artek, Vanguard, Musical Heritage, Albany, Northeastern and CBS World Records.

She has appeared as soloist before a sold-out audience in New York's Town Hall in the American premiere of Giovanni Battista Viotti's only cello concerto, and for Austrophon, she recorded Schumann Cello Concerto in Count Esterhazy's historic palace in Austria. She can also be heard in such diverse settings as the Montreux Jazz Festival, the films of Jim Jarmusch, and with the rock band Metallica. She has expanded the chamber ensemble repertoire - especially for multiple celli and cello and guitar - by arranging and transcribing works from every period. A longtime champion of contemporary music, she has commissioned and premiered works by many of today's leading composers.

Distinguished as a teacher as well as performer, Ms. Neuman has served as a juror for numerous international competitions. On the faculty at the New York's School for Strings and Hoff-Barthelson Music School, she has taught at Bennington College, Williams College and C.W. Post University.

Her cello is a J.B. Guadagnini, dating from 1772.

**Karin Scholz** is unquestionably one of the most impressive guitarists of her generation. Her sensitive playing, unusual repertoire and incomparable stage presence make her a fascinating artistic personality.

She has received numerous awards, including 1<sup>st</sup> Prize in the national „Jugend musiziert“ (1991), a stipend from the Deutsche Musikrat and selection to the federal „Konzerte Junger Künstler“ (1998). In international solo and chamber music competition, she has won prizes in Germany, Italy and France.

Karin Scholz has performed throughout Europe, Japan and the far East. In addition to her many chamber music activities, she works regularly with renowned orchestras and opera companies, including the Staatstheater Stuttgart, the Radio Symphony Orchestra Stuttgart, the Südwestfunk Radio Orchestra Kaiserslautern as well as the Staatstheater Wiesbaden. Karin Scholz also performs often with the new music ensemble „Musik der Jahrhunderte Stuttgart.“ As soloist she has been heard with the Camerata München and the Münchener Bachsolisten under Florian Sonnleitner.

A grant from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) enabled Karin Scholz to study with Oscar Ghiglia at the Musikakademie der Stadt Basel (Switzerland), where she absolved her Soloist's Diploma with excellence. Among her teachers are Jürgen Ruck and Alvaro Pierri.

Guitarist **Peter Ernst** is widely recognized and celebrated for his interpretations of solo and chamber music, including repertoire from the Renaissance to the present, as well as folkloristic music from South America. Among the many prizes he has received are the German National Youth Competition „Jugend musiziert“ and a grant from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) as well as international prizes at both solo- and chamber music competitions in Germany, Italy, France and Spain.

He has toured throughout Europe, Japan, the Middle East and the USA and has performed at music festivals in Spain, Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic. Mr. Ernst regularly appears as soloist with orchestras such as the Bergische Symphoniker under Peter Leonard and damals & heute under Michael Willens.

He has collaborated with ensembles for modern music such as „Musik der Jahrhunderte, Stuttgart“, Germany, and the „New Juilliard Ensemble“ in New York City.

Mr. Ernst has recorded six CDs. With the Duo Bergerac he appears exclusively on *Thorofon Classics*, with the Claremont Duo on Artek Records.

As a full scholarship holder at the Juilliard School in New York, Mr. Ernst studied with Sharon Isbin. His teachers in Germany were Michael Tröster, Thomas Müller-Pering, Dieter Kreidler and Jürgen Ruck.