

# Katie Stillman - violin



Canadian violinist **Katie Stillman** began her studies in London, Ontario, before joining the Young Artists' Performance Academy at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto where she studied with Martin Beaver and Annalee Patipatanakoon. When still only fifteen years of age, Katie toured Mexico giving recitals in Mexico City, San Miguel, Cuernavaca and Monterrey. In 1998, aged sixteen, Katie won the prestigious Grand Prize at the Canadian Music Competitions in Montreal. Already establishing herself as a highly successful soloist with regular appearances both in Canada and the UK, Katie subsequently won Radio Canada's Young Artists Performance Prize for the broadcast of her Toronto recital.

Following the award of a four-year International Undergraduate Scholarship from the Associated Boards in 1999, Katie came to England to study at the Royal Northern College of Music with Wen Zhou Li. Whilst on a joint course with the RNCM Katie also received her B(mus) from the University of Manchester with First Class Honours. Awarded the John Manduell Prize for outstanding achievement by the RNCM in 2003, Katie went on to gain her Masters degree with distinction from the RNCM in 2004 and was awarded her Postgraduate Diploma with distinction the following year.

During her time at the Royal Northern College of Music Katie won numerous other prizes, including the Granada Prize for the Performance of Messian's "quartet for the end of time", an English Speaking Union Scholarship to attend the Aspen Summer Music Festival to study with Sylvia Rosenberg and, in 2004, an Allcard Award from the Worshipful Company of Musicians. She has participated in masterclasses by Maxim Vengerov, Jamie Laredo, Anthony Marwood, Aaron Rosand and Ernst Kovacic. Katie's her most recent studies were with Yair Kless at the University for Music and Dramatic Arts in Graz, Austria, as a Wingate Scholar. Katie has won Myra Hess and Music Education Awards from the MBF as well as scholarships from the Countess of Munster Musical Trust and the Craxton Memorial Trust.

In the spring of 2005, Katie Stillman was chosen for the Tillett Trust's Young Artists' Platform leading to a series of concerts with duo partner Simon Lane which included recitals at Fairfield Hall, St. George's Bristol and their debut appearance at the Wigmore Hall. Katie and Simon later returned to the Wigmore Hall, having received the Maisie Lewis Award from the Worshipful Company of Musicians, and in 2007 made their debuts in the Manchester Mid-Day Series at Bridgewater Hall and in the Purcell Room as part of the Park Lane Group "Young Artists" New Year Series. In 2008-2009 the duo was selected by Making Music as recommended artists for the Concert Promoters Network Brochure, made a further return to the Wigmore Hall and gave a series of recitals around the UK which included performances at St. John's Smith Square, St. James's Piccadilly and St. George's Bristol. Over the last season, the duo has continued to build their following with a series of recitals around England and Scotland which have been very widely praised. Future plans include their first recording, which will focus on English music. Katie's prior solo engagements also include a concerto performance with the London Mozart Players.

Katie was a prize-winner at the 2006 CMC International Stepping Stones Competition, and was delighted to receive the Royal Overseas League's Edith Phipps Memorial Prize in 2007.

An avid chamber musician, Katie performs with the Barbirolli Quartet who, following their selection by the European Concert Halls Organisation (ECHO) as the UK Concert Halls' nominated 'Rising Stars', recently completed their tour of Europe's leading concert halls, comprising performances in thirteen cities. They also gave their Kirckman Concert Society Award recital at the Wigmore Hall in London. The quartet's previous projects include a tour of Singapore, New Zealand and Australia, giving concerts and adjudicating the Pettman/ROSL Arts International Scholarship, which was supported by the Royal Over-Seas League. The Barbirolli Quartet has recently been awarded a Chamber Music Fellowship by the Royal Academy of Music.

# Views and Reviews

## What makes a good violin and piano duo?

Tully Potter has his question answered by the end of a month's concert-going.

"In terms of a violin and piano duo, only at the end of the month did I hear a satisfactory combination of players, in a lunchtime recital at St John's, Smith Square, on 27th March. Then it took only a few bars of Beethoven's C minor Sonata from pianist Simon Lane for me to sense that I was going to hear a real partnership with violinist Katie Stillman. This young Canadian studied at the Royal Northern College of Music, where she got to know Lane. I thought she drew a beautiful line in the first two movements of the Beethoven, and I liked the viola-like plangency of her middle register.....

She and Lane characterised all four movements of the Beethoven vividly and always chose apt tempos, which they sustained well. Three pieces from Britten's Suite op.6 made a change, especially the lyrical "lullaby", coloured imaginatively by Stillman. I enjoyed Ravel's Sonata more than I usually do, because the artists seemed so sure of what they were doing."

### **Tully Potter June 2008 - The Strad**

## Talented duo get series off to good start

Katie Stillman (violin) Simon Lane (piano): St. George's Bristol

For the first of the summer Thursday lunchtime series, the young talented duo of Katie Stillman and Simon Lane presented two contrasting sonatas.

Ravel's Sonata in G written in 1927 presents difficulties for both parts and in the first movement the violinist maintained a beautiful long line with some superb playing. Both soloists made a convincing job of the central Blues section whilst in the Perpetuum Mobile, Miss Stillman showed considerable skill and infectious rhythm.

Franck's Sonata is altogether more straightforward and melodious. The languid opening on the violin prompts the pianist to respond in a grand manner which then leads into a dialogue between the two players.

The fiery allegro is followed by a recitativo which recalls earlier themes before the gentle finale in which the great tune sounded both spontaneous and joyful in their capable hands.

Stillman's subtle tone and clever choice of tempos were complimented by Lane's piano part – he proved an inspired partner with some highly polished playing.

### **John Packwood, 30/5/08 - The Bristol Evening Post**

## Six of the Best: a personal choice by Scottish Culture Minister

Phil Miller - The Herald

**Linda Fabiani, the Culture Minister, reviews the shows she has seen at the 2008 Edinburgh festivals.**

**Bach for Breakfast, Royal Overseas League, 100 Princes Street - Katie Stillman, violin, and Todd Yaniv, piano.**

"It was a marvellous way to start the day, and I wish I could do that more often. If we could all start the day with music like that then we would all be better off. Maybe if we had some chamber music in the chamber in the Scottish Parliament we would all be nicer to each other."

# Views and Reviews

I had the pleasure of hearing Katie a number of times during the Royal Overseas League Annual Music Competition where she was a recent prizewinner. I was struck by her sensitive and passionate musicianship matched by an excellent technique, the result being utterly persuasive performances by a young artist of immense talent. Katie was able to demonstrate a consummate understanding of a wide range of music from more mainstream repertoire to contemporary techniques all delivered with real aplomb and integrity. Her performance of Lutoslawski's "Subito" was particularly impressive and this was the view shared by the whole jury. She creates a wide range of colours and textures in her playing and is an excellent ensemble player and I would strongly urge any organisation that is in a position to help further this outstanding talent to do so without reservation. It is surely a worthy investment in such a fine young musician."

**Philip Dukes FGSM, HonARAM Professor Viola and Chamber Music, Royal Academy of Music and Head of Strings, Wells Cathedral School.**

Park Lane Group, Purcell Room, London

"With the New Year came the Park Lane Group's Young Artists Series, which since 1971 has been providing a platform for both new talent and contemporary music. On 8 January at the Purcell Room violinist Katie Stillman and pianist Simon Lane performed Paul Whitmarsh's 2006 *All these confessions...*, in which Stillman negotiated her way through a cornucopia of special effects, ending with deliberately scrunching overplaying, and found a certain winsome melancholia along the way. She was equally adept in the double-stopped ferocity of Colin Mathews's *Chaconne with Chorale and Moto Perpetuo* of 1988, where she also drew out mellifluous lines in an urgent musical landscape. There was luminous, gentle playing in Takemitsu's *From far beyond chrysanthemums and November fog*, and panache and authority in Lutoslawski's *Subito*, a late work marrying frantic moto perpetuo with vigorous melody."

**Tim Homfray, The Strad March 2007**

".....the Canadian violinist Katie Stillman and the pianist Simon Lane offered alert, sensitive and mature performances in a nicely planned programme of late 20th-century works....."

**Keith Potter 11/1/07 - The Independent**

PLG Young Artists - Purcell Room

"Stillman and Lane held their nerve and revealed exemplary technique in Lutoslawski's explosive and fiendishly testing *Subito*. ....."

**Richard Morrison 10/1/07 - The Times**

Fanfares and Moonbeams

"Park Lane Group's annual Young Artists series is a valuable showcase for emerging talent, and a bracing way to unblock ears still clogged with pre-Christmas pap. The chosen repertoire does not draw large audiences but the players' commitment, like their skill, is plain to see. Pianist Simon Lane and violinist Katie Stillman kicked off last night's first concert with Paul Whitmarsh's *All Those Confessions...*, as angular as the Patrick Caulfield images that provide its title. It became something mysterious and allusive within a deliberately restricted palette of colours; Lane and Stillman caught its shifting moods, now mournful and keening, now strident. In Witold Lutoslawski's *Subito*, the two instruments jostled for prominence before collapsing in a perfectly judged sonic heap"

**Nick Kimberley 9/1/07 - Evening Standard**

# Views and Reviews

## PLG Young Artists New Year Series - 8th January 2007

"Following pieces by Colin Matthews (Chaconne with Chorale: sinuous and eloquent; and Moto Perpetuo: driving) and Toru Takemitsu (From Far Beyond Chrysanthemums and November Fog: ethereal, poetic and exquisite), the latter finding Stillman accurate and expressive in the highest registers, Lutosławski's masterly Subito (one of his last works, from 1994) was given a quite brilliant performance revealing the music's web of fantasy and energy in the most compelling way"

**Colin Anderson - classicalsource.com**

## Wigmore Hall, 20th February 2006

The second part of this shared recital, presented by the Tillett Trust Young Artists' Platform, was perhaps more traditional but no less striking. The violinist Katie Stillman and pianist Simon Lane played Beethoven, Lutoslawski and Elgar in a way that commanded attention not just for its technical adroitness but also for its stylistic acumen. Tone and temperament were shrewdly pitched for Beethoven's A minor Sonata Op 23, capturing the music's spry propulsion in the first movement and its restless unease in the last.

Lutoslawski's *Subito* transcends its original function as a competition exercise, its testing contrasts of dynamics, touch and articulation distilled into a pungent miniature. Stillman and Lane performed it with a sharply focused spectrum of mood, and in Elgar's *E minor Sonata* combined tenderness, wistful nostalgia and red-blooded passion in an interpretation of terrific distinction and compelling emotional force.

**Geoffrey Norris, The Daily Telegraph 24/2/06**

## Honiton Festival 2006

"Katie Stillman, with pianist Simon Lane, provided stimulating accounts of sonatas by Mozart, Brahms and Debussy"

**John Dalton, 24th May 2006 - Midweek Herald**

## Young Artist's Platform – Fairfield Hall, 31st May 2005

The Canadian violinist Katie Stillman began the first half of the programme impressively with a tour de force by the Belgian composer, Eugene Ysaie (1858-1931), in No. 4 of his tough Six Sonatas. Musically they are none-too-special echoes of former times but a performer who can bring them to life as can Stillman makes them sound possibly more special than they deserve.

Joined by the fine pianist Simon Lane, there followed a vivid account of Beethoven's Sonata opus 12 no.3. This expressively driven duo breathed fresh air into the music as it passed from player to player.

**Howard Thomas, Croydon Advertiser**