



Jan Vogler

Jan Vogler has established himself as one of the finest young cellists on the world stage. He was principal cellist of the Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden but left the position in 1997 to concentrate on a career as a soloist. Since then, he has performed with major orchestras and conductors worldwide. Vogler also is a passionate chamber musician and co-founded the Moritzburg Festival, where he serves as artistic director.

The interview with cellist Jan Vogler was conducted prior to his debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in the Brahms Double Concerto in December 2007. Portions of the interview were published by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.
—Paula Tsurutani

Your concerts in December mark your debut in Chicago with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (conducted by Mark Elder). Tell us what you are most looking forward to—music-wise and as a visitor to the city. Chicago has a special place in my heart. It was the first American city I ever visited. I arrived from East Germany touring as a soloist with the Staatskapelle Dresden. I gave the American premiere of the Romance for cello and Orchestra by Richard Strauss at Orchestra Hall and fell in love with the city, the incredible Hall and the wonderful audience. Thanks to the Marlboro Music Festival I met Robert Chen (CSO concertmaster) and we soon played together in Germany and the States and became friends. I am very much looking forward to playing the Brahms for the first time with Robert.

How long has the Brahms been a part of your repertoire? I started off playing it with my brother. Later I played it with my wife. It is a great pleasure to discover different aspects of this great work by playing it with different partners.

What would you say to someone who's never heard this piece? What can the listener expect to hear, and what do you hope the listener will hear? The complete and perfect form of the piece, the great melodies and moments for each of the two soloists, and the dialogues between the two instruments and the orchestra.

You've also worked with Mark Anthony Turnage, who is one of the CSO's composers-in-residence. What has been your involvement with him and his work? He was "composer-in-residence" at my Festival in Moritzburg, near Dresden. We premiered a chamber work of his and it was very inspiring to have him at the festival.

Tell us about the Moritzburg Festival, where you are artistic director, and the Festival Academy. How long has the Festival been in existence? What was the inspiration? The festival was inspired by the Marlboro Music Festival. We started it in 1993 on a rather small scale, but soon the audience joined in and I had to keep up with the dynamics of the project. Now we have thirteen concerts in two weeks and audiences from all over the world come to this idyllic small town with its beautiful castle to listen to the concerts.

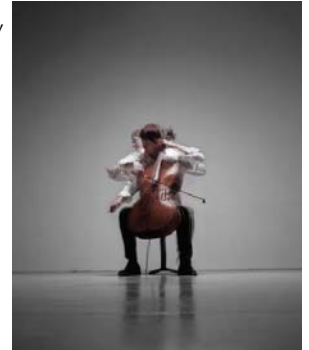
The Festival Academy is a rather young project. We started it only last year. Music students from all over the world form the Moritzburg Festival orchestra and all the players also study chamber music. I wanted to give young players a stage and chance to meet our artists, to learn from them and from each other.

What are your interests outside of music? Music does dominate my life and often doesn't leave much time for other activities. But I am very interested in visual arts and my special interests are paintings of the first half of the 20th century, with a focus on German Expressionism.

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Looking ahead, tell us about new projects, recordings, or repertoire that you will be working on. “My tunes”—a collection of short pieces for cello and orchestra was just released in the U.S. on Sony Classical. It is a very personal record that contains my favorite short pieces, some of them not originally written for cello.

And my newest recording ‘concerti brillanti’—concertos of the 18th century, will come out next week on the same label in Germany. It was great to join my Montagnana cello revisiting the century it had already seen, since it was born in 1721.



Finally, please add anything else you’d like Chicago music lovers to know about your upcoming work with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. I am very excited to meet and to play with the Chicago Symphony, an orchestra I’ve admired since I started playing the cello!