



## ***PRESS QUOTES FROM OUR THREE PAST FESTIVALS***

### **BEETHOVEN FESTIVAL: LOVE 2013**

#### ***CHICAGO MAGAZINE, May 22, 2013 Graham Meyer:***

- “The festival itself is a work of art. You walk in, and you belong to the work of art. It’s an installation. It’s a living body, a living universe.”
- “beautiful playing merged with lack of pretension.”

#### ***Greg Sandow’s ARTSBLOG, written by Lara Downes, May 22, 2013:***

- “there’s a new sheriff in town”
- “These are musicians who are fundamentally changing the cultural life of cities and towns across America.”
- “There was an absolutely electric sense of possibility and excitement in the air that week. The crowd was young and gorgeous, the musicians were playing at 200%, everyone was doing ten things at once, flying by the seats of pants, scrambling to find more chairs, more wine, a page turner, another driver. Everyone’s moms and girlfriends and boyfriends were pulling double shifts, and every possible favor was called in. No one got paid very much, and no one really cared. It was terrific.”

#### ***CHICAGO TRIBUNE, John von Rhein, May 8, 2013:***

- “Lepauw calls the 2013 Beethoven fest “a work of total art” that performers and audience members alike “can walk into and actively participate in. It's about creating connections among artists, encouraging them to take risks, climb out of their boxes and push their creativity to the limits. Beethoven inspires us to constantly reinvent ourselves artistically.””

#### ***NEWCITY WEEKLY, September 5, 2013***

- That the festival is continuing to branch out and include appeals to modern music styles and pop songwriting technique is a good sign for the years to come, while this edition is poised to be the catalyst for a continued revitalization of history’s most crucial composer.

#### ***HUFFINGTON POST September 5, 2013 by Elysabeth Alfano***

- I am always amazed by what one person can do. One idea, propelled by the determination of a true believer can literally change the world. When other people get on board it can grow exponentially and anything is possible. Every artform has their champion that takes the art to newfound heights and for classical music in Chicago -- and in short order the world -- that person is George Lepauw. [...]

## **WTTW TELEVISION: CHICAGO TONIGHT September 5, 2013, PHIL PONCE**

<http://chicagotonight.wttw.com/2013/09/05/beethoven-fest> (Video of newscast on the link)

## **TIME-OUT CHICAGO, Doyle Armbrust, Sept 6, 2013**

- George Lepauw's audacity in creating an XXL-sized classical music festival in Chicago is a story in and of itself, but the roster for the 2013 installment, entitled "LOVE," is simply astounding. The founder, president and Chicago resident has assembled a 9-day, 100-plus event affair that includes visual art installations, fashion shows, educational opportunities and new-music programming to interact with the Festival's classical core. [...] That one-day passes for Lollapalooza were \$95 this summer makes the Beethoven Festival's \$30 price tag seem like grand larceny. The festival largely takes place at the Merit School of Music.

## **WBEZ RADIO September 9, 2013 WITH TONY SARABIA**

<http://storify.com/WBEZ/morning-shift-60> (Click to access website with audio clip)

## **COLUMBIA CHRONICLE SEPTEMBER 9, 2013, Heather Kostelnik:**

- Lepauw said his main goal for creating the festival was to embody Beethoven's spirit, but make it resonate with many different people. Through the Beethoven Festival, Lepauw said he strives to eliminate misconceptions about classical music.

- The festival is about Beethoven as a whole rather than a focus on just his music, Lepauw said.

- "It's more about carrying forth our conviction that in order for any art to be relevant, it needs to connect to what's important in our day and time. The instruments have changed, and people listening have a different perception because music itself has also evolved."

- [...] Although Beethoven's work is considered classic, he was a modern-day rebel in his music scene, according to Lepauw. Beethoven never conformed to societal norms. He switched up his music regardless of what people thought or what his admirers wanted from him, Lepauw said.

## **REVIEW FROM CHICAGO TRIBUNE, Sept. 10, 2013, JOHN VON RHEIN:**

- This time around, even Rahm Emanuel is feeling the love. The fact that the Chicago mayor has proclaimed Sept. 7-15 "Beethoven Festival Week in Chicago" can only help to lure more curiosity seekers to the festival's third annual edition. [...] Attendance has picked up over previous years, [...] and this year's offerings – more than 100 multidisciplinary events packed into nine days – make this an event you ignore at your own peril.

- The Chicago-based, nonprofit International Beethoven Project, which is presenting Beethoven Festival: "LOVE 2013," wants our town to rank right up there with New York, Paris and London when it comes to putting on world-class arts festivals. And while project president George Lepauw isn't there yet, he is making a determined effort. Who else in Chicago music has this man's outsize vision?

- And there's a healthy synergy of impulse between the festival and the Merit School [festival hub], which gives disadvantaged school kids from across the city access to quality music education. Many Merit students are taking advantage of Lepauw's opening his doors to all students, free of charge. How gratifying it was to hear a packed hall of mostly young people whooping with pleasure following a thorny program of electro-acoustical music by Karlheinz Stockhausen and Hans Thomalla [...].

### ***CHICAGO CLASSICAL REVIEW September 10, 2013, LAWRENCE JOHNSON:***

- The best way to experience the dauntingly ambitious and wildly packed Beethoven Festival is to do a full immersion if possible and try to hit as many events in a single day and night. The introductions by pianist/artistic director George Lepauw and other performers set the scene and there is a relaxed salon-like informality about the proceedings that invites longer listening sessions.

- [...] As in previous festival installments, the level of performance was consistently high, the range of repertoire wide and audacious. Perhaps most importantly, the audiences were significantly larger than last year, which bodes well for the future of Lepauw's International Beethoven Project.

- One of the most gratifying elements of the Beethoven Festival is the opportunity to encounter new artists that one rarely hears in Chicago.

### ***REVIEW FROM CHICAGO TRIBUNE, ALAN ARTNER, SEPTEMBER 15, 2013:***

#### **Win-win at fest with Beethoven's Fifth blend**

-Everything that most concerts of classical music aren't is what the concerts of the International Beethoven Project want to be. [...] Sometimes the mixture of food and drink and music and art and boastful hipster casualness really works, as it did on Saturday afternoon's outsize program of world premieres at the Merit School of Music. [...] So it was, as they say, a win-win situation that had classical pieces (played by one or another of a team of seven pianists) regularly roused by more extrovert rock treatments.

### ***REVIEW FROM CHICAGOMUSIC.ORG, SEPT. 16, 2013, ELLIOT MANDEL:***

- Wait, why is an accordionist playing Stevie Wonder at something called the Beethoven Festival? Who cares. "Music is music," said Alban Berg to George Gershwin (thanks [Alex Ross](#)). No ensemble in Chicago embodies this idea more than the Spektral Quartet, which regularly programs Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven alongside the ensemble's contemporaries such as Marcos Balter and Chris Fisher-Lochhead. On a larger scale, the Beethoven Festival amplifies Spektral's approach to music and performance by recontextualizing the repertorial favorites, adding an all-encompassing approach to curating a music event, and creating an entirely new atmosphere for the listener. [...]

- Such is the Beethoven Fest – decadent in music and visual art and bursting with ambition. [...] More than anything else, the Beethoven Festival proves there is room among the standard repertoire and choreographed concert etiquette for audiences to lounge on pillows, for artists to play Arcade Fire after Beethoven, for Bach to inspire avant-garde art, and for all of it to live under one roof in a loose and wide-ranging environment. Congratulations to the Beethoven Festival for loosening – and discarding – the bowties, and for allowing the joy, humor, and spontaneity of the music and its artists to thrive.

# **BEETHOVEN FESTIVAL: REVOLUTION 2012**

## ***CHICAGO TRIBUNE'S "CHICAGOAN OF THE YEAR"***

### ***JOHN VON RHEIN, DECEMBER 30, 2012:***

“Absolute conviction, thinking big and a determination to turn his idealistic vision into something new, daring and important for the cultural life of Chicago are the forces that drive [Chicagoan of the Year] Lepauw.”

## ***REVIEW FROM CHICAGO TRIBUNE, JOHN VON RHEIN, SEPT. 14, 2012:***

“Richly stocked Beethoven Fest is city's best-kept cultural secret, so far. [... George] Lepauw, a prodigious pianist who lives in Paris but maintains close ties to Chicago, along with hundreds of other participants from nearly a dozen countries, are honoring Beethoven in a big – nay, mammoth – way this week. [...] The scope is as boundless as the imagination and energies of Lepauw, its artistic director. [...] "Revolution 2012" is something you can't catch anywhere else on the planet, an event of world-class importance, and I hope it succeeds in attracting the audiences it deserves. [...] A BYOB policy tells you you're not in Orchestra Hall anymore.”

## ***THE CHICAGOIST, ALEXANDER HOUGH, SEPT. 10, 2012:***

“Chicago now has a substantial (and hopefully regular) classical music festival that can rival those on the coasts.”

## ***HUFFINGTON POST, ELYSABETH ALFANO, SEPT. 9, 2012:***

“Beethoven Festival: Revolution 2012 will leave a ripple effect in the Chicago art community not only due to the exceptional quality of performances from artists and musicians, but for its bravery of scale and scope and reach.”

## ***TIME OUT CHICAGO, MIA CLARKE, SEPT. 8, 2012:***

“George Lepauw’s Beethoven Festival is back and bursting at the seams.”

## ***CHICAGO CLASSICAL REVIEW, MICHAEL CAMERON, SEPT. 10, 2012:***

“[...] fraying duct tape left a trace of adhesive on my pants, but that was a small price to pay for such unflinching artistic standards.”

***CLASSICAL REVIEW, LAWRENCE JOHNSON, SEPT. 16, 2012:***

“Imagine a music festival where just one day’s events wind up running four hours longer than Parsifal. Such was Wednesday’s installment of the Beethoven Festival in Chicago. Brainchild of the indefatigable pianist George Lepauw [...] now in its second year, [the festival] truly is a unique and unprecedented event in Chicago. [...] In addition to being a prodigiously gifted pianist, Lepauw proved a personable and engaging host with his introductions and brief interviews with musicians setting an inviting air of relaxed informality. [...] Later in the evening,] Lepauw asked the visibly spent Tétreault to encore the Bach Cello Suite he had played eight hours earlier—not a movement, but the entire suite. To his credit, the gracious young Canadian did not poke Lepauw in the eye with his bow but performed the Bach once again, with burnished tone and even deeper feeling than earlier in the day. It was approaching midnight but the evening was not yet over...”

***CHICAGO TRIBUNE, ALAN ARTNER, SEPT. 15, 2012:***

“[...] programming showed unusual imagination and freshness of delivery.”

***SPEKTRAL BLOG, AUSTIN WULLIMAN, SEPT. 18, 2012:***

“The sheer energy, enthusiasm and blind disregard for the easy way out in the name of art was infectious. George Lepauw has started something truly remarkable that seems to be taking on a life of its own.”

***CHICAGO CLASSICAL REVIEW, LAWRENCE JOHNSON, SEPT. 17, 2012:***

“The Beethoven Festival closed Sunday with all due revolutionary fervor. [...] programming excess and “just one more thing” is part of the Beethoven Festival’s charm. [...] After 60 events in nine days, what will Lepauw and company do for an encore next year? I’ll be there to find out.”

# **BEETHOVEN FESTIVAL 2011: MAN & MUSE**

## ***CHICAGO TRIBUNE, JOHN VON RHEIN, DEC. 28, 2011:***

"My candidate for the year's best new undertaking in classical music was the International Beethoven Project's **Beethoven Festival 2011**, an ambitious, eclectic, barrier-blasting, uneven, ultimately wonderful celebration of Ludwig van Beethoven and composers who fell under his towering influence. For five days and nights, the Chicago Urban Art Society rocked to concerts, master classes and discussions that grappled with the idea of what Beethoven's music means, and can mean, to today's listeners. More, please."

## ***TIME OUT CHICAGO, MIA CLARKE, DEC. 14, 2011:***

"Local pianist George Lepauw's **Beethoven Festival** was the unexpected smash of the season. Housed in a Pilsen warehouse over five days in September, the interdisciplinary fest showcased music, art, lectures and film inspired by the German giant. Lepauw's dream paid off, with hordes of Chicago-area and guest musicians gathering for heartfelt performances in a laid-back setting. The event was hard evidence of the sense of community among our city's young musicians. More important, it was proof that classical can be performed in radical environments and be inclusive, inviting and exciting to all."

## ***CHICAGO SUN-TIMES, ANDREW PATNER, DEC. 28, 2011:***

"An explosion of youth: [...] Enterprising pianist-impresario George Lepauw showed that similar work [edgy new productions] could be done with good ol' Ludwig van when he staged a weeklong **Beethoven festival** in Pilsen with the participation and attendance of a multitude of his twentysomething peers."

## ***CHICAGO TRIBUNE, JOHN VON RHEIN, SEPTEMBER 20, 2011:***

### **Ludwig rocks! Inaugural fest a barrier-blasting banquet of Beethoven (and others)**

The overall objective, said Lepauw, president of the Chicago-based International Beethoven Project, under whose aegis the festival was held, was "to start a conversation about Beethoven, what he means to us now and how he can inspire us today." For the committed bands of listeners who came and went during the marathon programs, it did all that and more.

I took in three days and nights of the festival and came away secure in the belief I will never hear Beethoven's music quite the same way ever again.

A miracle worker indeed, Lepauw put together this colossal undertaking in only about four months. Not only that, the pianist was one of the mainstays of the chamber, solo and orchestral programs, along with his Beethoven Project Players and keyboard colleagues Winston Choi and Marta Aznavoorian. The young Chicago composer Mischa Zupko curated a contemporary chamber marathon on Friday, as well as Sunday's climactic event – the world premiere of 19 new bagatelles for solo piano inspired by Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" performed by the three pianists in rotation.

The same pianists anchored a program of Beethoven piano sonatas on Saturday evening, with Aznavoorian offering a firmly controlled "Tempest," Choi a clear-headed Opus 101 and Lepauw a swashbuckling "Waldstein."

Beethoven, whose music always seems to be struggling against impossible odds, surely would have doffed his hat to Lepauw, the festival's hard-working, seemingly indefatigable hero. Having masterminded the entire affair, he kept everything and everyone hopping right to the end. He took part in no fewer than 10 programs, including a full-blooded account of the "Emperor" Concerto with the 35-piece Beethoven Festival Orchestra under Robert McConnell.

"The struggle paid off," declared Lepauw, master of the Beethovenian revels, before Sunday's closing night celebration. He was entitled to toot his own horn a bit, since his verdict was absolutely correct. I, for one, can hardly wait for Beethoven Festival 2012.

## ***TIME OUT CHICAGO, MIA CLARKE, SEPT. 14, 2011:***

*Excerpts from an interview with George Lepauw*

George Lepauw kicks back in a chartreuse armchair in the lounge of downtown's Union League Club. It's hard to imagine that the relaxed 31-year-old is a mere two weeks away from spearheading a classical festival of epic proportion.

"I always dream big!" Lepauw says. "I like to take things into my own hands. Of course, it's hard work, too. No one in their right mind would plan a festival in four months."

What began as a pipe dream for the French-born concert pianist rapidly snowballed into a jam-packed five-day shindig featuring more than 100 musicians, 17 contemporary artists and filmmakers, five renowned scholars, two actors (who will recite Beethoven's letters) and a poet.

Lepauw's Beethoven bash may well be Chicago's hippest and most inclusive classical festival to date, but what really makes it special is its community vibe. Given the pianist's warmth, experience and contagious enthusiasm, it's not surprising that many of Chicago's hottest acts—Ensemble Dal Niente, Fulcrum Point, Spektral Quartet, Anaphora and composer Mischa Zupko—jumped on board with their pal's adventure.

Lepauw praises his invaluable presenting partners High Concept Laboratories for helping to put together the fest, which is almost solely funded by private donors. "I'm humbled to see how much this project has grown since the beginning," he says, "this isn't just a concert, but a life experience."

## ***CHICAGO TRIBUNE, JOHN VON RHEIN, AUGUST 21, 2011:***

Among the highlights is an orchestral concert with Robert McConnell and Daniel Boico alternating on the podium. A contemporary art and film exhibit curated by Catinca Tabacaru will include new works by Michael Cuffe, David J. Eichenberg, Carly Ivan Garcia and other artists. Also, an educational program of performances and master classes by young local musicians will precede a panel discussion by Beethoven scholars Alessandra Comini, Benedetta Saglietti and James F. Green. Among the musicians and ensembles taking part in the festival will be pianists George Lepauw, Winston Choi and Marta Aznavoorian; members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Avalon and Spektral quartets; Fulcrum Point New Music Project; Ensemble Dal Niente; Anaphora; and Quintet Attacca.

"Few people get to experience the great master as he should be — a true radical in a radical setting," said Lepauw, president and artistic director of the International Beethoven Project. "Beethoven was a rebel who broke all the rules of musical and societal conventions, changing forever the world of art and the rights of the artist. He was the first modernist."

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