

# Poetic Piano

**Actor Hartmut Becker & Pianist Evelyn Ulex**

## *Poets & Musicians on the Road*

Our presentation is a journey, on a joyous and torturous road traveled by Poets and Musicians of the past 250 years. It is two artists sharing a story about the soul and life of the artist, told through the poetry and music of artists who came before us.

Artists are continually in motion, in thought and in life. They are constantly searching for a new road; one that will lead them out of the mainstream, into a land of truth, of transcendent reality, of vivid perceptions.

Sometimes that road was not simply a metaphor, it was a means fleeing political oppression, such as Heinrich Heine. At other times it means a sojourn in a foreign land searching for beauty, intensity and inspiration, as Goethe had done throughout his life.

History is generous in providing periods when artists like Bert Brecht, Anna Seghers and Lion Feuchtwanger were forced into exile by dictators and tyrants who were threatened by their independent political expression and cultural non-conformity. In these times, a foreign country became a place of an unwelcome hegira, with its unfamiliar language and little possibility for work.

Adding to their enduring struggles, after a chaotic world returned to its routine, many artists found returning home to be unexpectedly difficult. For some it led to greater creativity for others these emotions were too much to bear (Wolfgang Borchert).

*Poets and Musicians on the road* tells stories with music which connect the lives of Heinrich Heine, Goethe, Beethoven, Brahms, Anna Seghers and Alban Berg, from Lion Feuchtwanger and Boris Blacher, Bert Brecht and Kurt Weill, to Wolfgang Borchert, Samuel Barber, Klaus Pohl and Rodion Schtschedrin. We take the audience on a journey that traverses happy moments, funny situations and sad events, the real and surreal; so that like the artist, for a few minutes at least, they too escape the mainstream.

## Escaping

Brahms, op.118/Ballade  
HEINRICH HEINE (1797–1856)  
Excerpts from „Germany: A Winter's Tale“, poems  
Beethoven Sonate, op.27/2, 1.Movement

## On the road

GOETHE (1749–1832)  
Excerpts from his biography „Italian Journey“, Ballads  
Brahms, Ballade op.118

## Emigration

ANNA SEGHERS (1900–1983)  
Excerpts from the novel „The Seventh Cross“ & „Neue Deutsche Blätter“  
Alban Berg , Sonata op.1

LION FEUCHTWANGER (1884–1959)  
Excerpts from his story book „Odysseus and the swine“  
& „Wetcheek's American song book“  
Kurt Weill, Intermezzo

BERTOLT BRECHT (1889–1956)  
Excerpts from screenplay „Hangmen also die“, poems & songs  
Boris Blacher, aus trois pieces No. 2 & 3

## Return home

WOLFGANG BORCHERT (1921–1947)  
Excerpts from the drama „The Man Outside“,  
Excerpts from his story book „Hundeblume“  
Samuel Barber, Blues

## Today

KLAUS POHL (born 1952) \*  
Excerpts from screenplay „Karata Billy Returns“ & „Waiting room Germany“

Schtschedrin: Basso ostinato

**Hartmut Becker, actor**

Hartmut Becker is a German popular stage and film star. He has worked in the theatre since 1962, during which time he has starred in dozens of plays and has been featured in many international and national film and television productions.

At theatres he was playing leading parts at the state theatres of Munich, Vienna, Berlin and others.

His film debut he made in 1970 in Michael Verhoeven's feature film *O.K.*. The film was the official German contribution at the International Film Festival Berlin 1970 and its hot political expressiveness was the sensation of Berlin and killed the festival. Hartmut's performing in this film earned several prizes and a great praise in the German feature articles. After *O.K.* Hartmut Becker was one of Germany's busiest actors in film and theatre.

His first leading part in an English language production Mr. Becker performed in the BBC-film *Forgive our foolish ways*, where he played the role of a German prisoner of war next to Kate Nelligan. The television film became a very big success all over the world. Mr. Becker's following international film was the American-English production *Jenny's War* (Columbia Pictures). His partners in this film were Dyan Cannon, Elke Sommer and Trevor Howard. For his widely praised performance in the following American production *Escape from Sobibor* (director: Jack Gold, also starring Alan Arkin and Rutger Hauer) Hartmut had been nominated for an Emmy Award 1988. In his next Festival-Film (*Il decimo clandestino* /Festival International du Film Cannes 1989) Hartmut Becker worked together with admirable director Lina Wertmüller. His female partner in this feature film was Dominique Sanda. Several dream parts followed, for example the characters Niels Jost in *A quiet conspiracy* (Channel 4; also starring Joss Ackland), Rauscher in the American Film *Triumph of the Spirit* (director: Robert M. Young; with Willem Dafoe, Robert Loggia), King Christian in *Young Catherine* (American TV; with a.o. Venessa Redgrave, Julia Ormond, Marthe Keller, Maximilian Schell; director: Michael Anderson) and last not least Dieter Krause in the English TV-thriller *The Waiting Time* (ITV 1999; director: Stuart Orme). His last leading in a German feature film was the part of Goran in *The Unforgotten*.

Since 1998 Mr. Becker is producing performances with literature and music. He works with innovative musicians from Germany: Evelyn Ulex (piano), Eva-Christina Schoenweiss (violine/DSO Berlin), Babette Haag (percussionist), American cellist Wayne Foster-Smith, American soprano Cassandra Hoffman and Canadian pianist Maureen Malis.

## **Evelyn Ulex, pianist**

Evelyn Ulex, was born in Berlin, Germany. At the age of ten, she won the national "Festival of Young Talent" competition in Dresden and later received top medals in the J.S. Bach competition in Leipzig, Germany. She was placed in the prestigious Special School for Music in Berlin, continued her studies at the Hanns Eisler University, graduated from the UdK in Berlin, and pursued further studies with Prof. Boris Bloch at the Folkwang Hochschule, where she received her artist diploma.

Ms. Ulex was a finalist in the Frienna Awerbuch International Piano Competition in New York City, laying the cornerstone for her careers in both the United States and Europe.

She has performed as a soloist, with orchestras, and intensively in chamber music concerts throughout Europe and the Americas, including such venues as the Philharmonie & Konzerthaus in Berlin, Philharmonie Gdansk, Southampton International Pianofest, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Symphony Space, 92nd Street Y, Library for the Performing Arts in NYC,

Summerfestival at Rutgers University New Jersey, the German Consulate General in New York, Miami and Vancouver.

In her native Germany, she has appeared on Culture broadcast Berlin Brandenburg and on the series "Artist Portraits" on Radio 3.

Ms. Ulex collaborates directly with contemporary composers, providing input and performing their works (recording for Koch Records music by John David Earnest).

Along with her solo performances, Ms. Ulex participates in innovative chamber music concerts including those with soprano Katia Guedes on "200 Years of Brazilian classical Songs", "Sight & Sound," a brilliant collaboration with artist Ade Frey.

She is also a founding member of the TransAtlantic Ensemble with clarinetist Mariam Adam (Imani Winds), performing classical standards to crossover Jazz compositions.

A solo CD has just been released by Eroica Records.