

Martin Rasch

Pianist Martin Rasch was born in 1974 and lives in Munich where he attended the University of Music and Performing Arts, studying, among others, with Rainer Fuchs, Hugo Steurer and Gerhard Oppitz. He was also greatly influenced and encouraged by pianist Alfred Brendel. Since 2002, his concert appearances have been supplemented by teaching responsibilities at his Munich alma mater.

Martin Rasch has won numerous awards and prizes, among them first prize at the International Piano Competition in Calabria (1996), the E.ON Prize for the Promotion of the Arts (2002) and the Bavarian Prize for the Promotion of the Arts (2004).

Meeting and dealing with artistic challenges has become a trademark of Martin Rasch's career. In 1997, he created a sensation in Munich when he played all of Frédéric Chopin's etudes in the course of a single evening. Together with the Munich Symphony Orchestra he played Ludwig van Beethoven's five piano concertos over the course of three nights as part of Munich's millennium celebrations. The collaboration of Martin Rasch and the Munich Symphony Orchestra continued with piano concertos by Mozart, Schumann, Chopin, Liszt, Brahms und Rachmaninow.

The works by Ludwig van Beethoven have always represented the cornerstone of Martin Rasch's extensive repertoire. In 2002/2003 he presented for the first time in his career the complete cycle of all 32 piano sonatas, received with high acclaim by the Munich public. He has since given numerous performances of this oeuvre, including Beethoven's major variations for piano.

In the spring of the Mozart Year 2006, he played all of that composer's piano sonatas in Dortmund, Heidelberg and the Bavarian city of Straubing; in autumn of the same year, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of his death, he honoured Robert Schumann with a four-part concert series at Munich's Gasteig concert hall, including Schumann's most significant piano works. In 2007 Martin Rasch, together with the cellist Dietrich von Kaltenborn, performed Beethoven's complete sonatas and variations for piano and violoncello.

Together with the renowned organist Edgar Krapp, Martin Rasch has championed the piano and organ sonatas of the remarkably gifted Liszt disciple, composer Julius Reubke, in a series of highly successful concerts. In 2008, they performed Reubke's complete works in the Bamberg Concert Hall. Chamber music highlights of 2009 were concerts with the Wind Soloists of the Munich Philharmonic. Quintets for piano and winds by Mozart, Beethoven and Jörg Duda highlighted the programme.

Between 2008 and 2010, Martin Rasch focussed on performing both parts of "The Well-Tempered Clavier" by Johann Sebastian Bach. In Schloss Elmau, Rasch put together a three-night concert series during which he contrasted the preludes and fugues from the first part of that work with compositions of Arnold Schönberg as well as the final three piano sonatas by Beethoven. In 2010 and 2011 he performed programmes dedicated respectively and exclusively to the works of Frédéric Chopin and Franz Liszt, on the occasion of each composer's 200th birthday.

The years 2012-2013 saw Martin Rasch in Bayreuth performing the complete piano sonatas of Ludwig van Beethoven for the fifth time. In a series of ten concerts dedicated solely to Beethoven, he played not only the sonatas but also other major works for keyboard including the so-called "Diabelli-Variations" and the "Eroica-Variations". To celebrate the bicentenary of Richard Wagner's birth, Martin Rasch gave a series of concerts in Munich, Straubing and Kiel which featured Wagner's original compositions for piano as well as variations and adaptations from, among others, Franz Liszt, Glenn Gould and Alfred Pringsheim, the father-in-law of author Thomas Mann.

A live recording of Beethoven's Hammerklavier-Sonata op. 106 as well as his Sonata op. 109 has been released on CD by the label "Organum Classics". For the Bavarian Radio in Munich, Martin Rasch has recorded the complete piano works of Arnold Schönberg, the piano works of composer/conductor Hans Stadlmair, Julius Reubke's only piano sonata as well as works by Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Liszt and Robert Schumann. The years 2014-2016 brought a new intensive concentration on Beethoven. He recorded the 32 piano sonatas for a 9-part CD-series (international release 2017 by "audite").

In 2017/18 he played the complete sonata-cycle in Regensburg. Due to the great success the concert series was extended with a performance of the sonatas and variations for piano and violoncello. The cellist was his longtime chambermusic partner Dietrich von Kaltenborn. In a trio formation complemented with Arben Spahiu (violin) they realized a large part of the literature for piano trio with works by Beethoven, Brahms, Rachmaninow, Tschaikowski, Schostakowitsch, Ravel und Franck and others. In 2019 they performed as part of the Munich Opera Festival at the sold out Cuvilliés-Theater. Since 2019 Martin Rasch is preparing intensely the piano works by Franz Schubert. He brings cycles of the piano sonatas and piano pieces on stage in Ansbach and Regensburg. In 2020, the year of Beethoven's 250th birthday, he gives lecture concerts dedicated to the significance, development and interpretation of the 32 piano sonatas. In September/October he performs the complete sonatas at the Artforum Lorenz in Schaeftlarn.