

Emmanuel Pahud

The Swiss flautist and Berlin Philharmonic principal on balancing life as a globe-trotting orchestral musician and soloist

Funny weather – it is snowing in October and I'm on the way to Prince Regent's Theatre in Munich to perform the Jolivet Concerto and Boulez's *Mémoriale* with the Munich Chamber Orchestra under Alexander Liebreich. It is the opening concert of their season, a completely French evening also including Ravel and Varèse. When it comes to an encore, my obvious choice is *Syrinx* by Debussy, the missing French composer in the programme.

A couple of days earlier I was at the Sendesaal in Bremen with guitarist Christian Rivet for an 'Around the World' concert to promote the release of our album. A group of passionate musicians have succeeded in saving that venue from destruction, and we enjoyed its truly exceptional atmosphere and acoustic during recording last May with producer Stephen Johns and sound engineer Arne Akselberg.

'It is fascinating to work with composers with brilliant minds and great taste'

On the way to Bremen, I stopped off in Hamburg for lunch with Stephanie Haase of Warner Classics and went to Klassik Radio to promote the new recording. I was still recovering from the very intense evening at the Berlin Philharmonic, 'To Russia with Love', with Gidon Kremer. He had gathered musicians such as Martha Argerich, Khatia Buniatishvili, Sergei Nakariakov and Daniel Barenboim to play for human rights in Russia. What a joy to watch Argerich and Barenboim play with such beauty an encore of four hands Schubert!

At the start of the season I was on tour in Europe with the Berlin Philharmonic with a beautiful Schoenberg/Berg/Stravinsky programme. We also experimented with the Scharoun Ensemble and Matthias Pintscher – 12 new works commissioned from different composers, all in one concert presented in the legendary Mozarteum by the Salzburg Foundation. Part of my share was the first performance of the Pintscher piece *Beyond (A System of Passing)* for solo flute, derived from *Transir*, his flute concerto, which I premiered in 2006. It is fascinating to work with composers who have such brilliantly organised minds and great taste, and who challenge instrumental technical limitations beyond anything that has been done before.

A solo tour in late September took me to three cities with wonderful concert halls and great orchestras – Salt Lake City, Valladolid and Luxembourg; I played flute-and-orchestra pieces by Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Carter, Reinecke and Ibert. The work Utah Symphony are doing with their new music director Thierry Fischer is truly amazing, and I could also enjoy the breathtaking scenery, the great mountain air while hiking, and the fresh local produce. Exercising is important when you are on the road, as we all tend to put on weight



Mozarteum rehearsal with Pintscher and the Scharoun Ensemble



While in Munich I find time to work with some children on the Rhapsody in School project

Backstage with Georgian pianist Khatia Buniatishvili after 'To Russia with Love'



Rehearsing 'Around the World' with Christian at the Sendesaal

with late dinners after concerts. . . Walking in a new town is also a great way of getting to know it better, and helps me to regenerate, as does a five-minute daily exercise routine in the hotel room. When I get back home to Berlin, I'll try to cycle more if the weather allows.

Another important aspect of a musician's life is the responsibility of gathering other musicians to perform together. This is why I founded, together with clarinetist Paul Meyer and pianist Eric Le Sage, the chamber music festival *Musique à l'Emperi* in the gorgeous courtyard of the castle in the middle of Salon-de-Provence. We gathered there for the 21st time for about two weeks at the turn of July and August. There was a bunch of 25 musicians we like to play with – we were all there for the pure joy of spending time together. With Marseille Provence being the European Capital of Culture 2013, our tribute was an extremely colourful programme centred around the Mediterranean. We had string players from France and also from the Berlin Philharmonic, and wind players such as Les Vents Français (François Leleux, Paul Meyer, Radovan Vlatković and Gilbert Audin). There's no time to look back – music is always in the making! 🎵

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