

LIVE FROM LINCOLN CENTER
"Perlman at the Penthouse"

January 5, 2000 8:00 PM on PBS
Itzhak Perlman, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Rohan de Silva

Program Notes by MARTIN BOOKSPAN

LIVE FROM LINCOLN CENTER began its historic and precedent-shattering run on PBS television in January, 1976--the year of the American Bicentennial. In the quarter-century since then, our cameras and microphones have brought you entertainment from virtually every performing venue at Lincoln Center, including Avery Fisher Hall, the Metropolitan Opera House, Alice Tully Hall, the Juilliard Theater and the Vivian Beaumont Theater. To inaugurate the New Year on January 5, and to herald the next millennium, LIVE FROM LINCOLN CENTER will broadcast from one of Lincoln Center's newer performing spaces, perched atop an office building in the Lincoln Center complex.

70 Lincoln Center Plaza is one of the liveliest buildings on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. It serves as the headquarters for LIVE FROM LINCOLN CENTER- and the rest of Lincoln Center's administrative staff. Great Performers at Lincoln Center, the Lincoln Center Festival, Mostly Mozart Festival, and many of the constituent members of Lincoln Center call 70 Lincoln Center Plaza home, including the Chamber Music Society, the Film Society, and the Lincoln Center Institute. Here you'll also find Meet-the-Artist Programs, the Metropolitan Opera Guild, and the School of American Ballet.

Sitting at the very top of 70 Lincoln Center Plaza is the Kaplan Penthouse, a large but homey room normally used by Lincoln Center for receptions, press conferences and the like. On the evening of January 5, the Kaplan Penthouse will be transformed into an intimate music salon as Itzhak Perlman, in company with pianist Rohan de Silva and the famed Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, plays some of his favorite music. When discussing the program with Perlman, John Goberman asked him to put together a recital of the kind of music that he would play for his friends; and so what has emerged is a wonderful mix of serious virtuosity and gems from the encore repertory that Sir Thomas Beecham used to dub "lollipops."

About a year ago Perlman joined forces with the Juilliard School, his musical alma mater and a Lincoln Center constituent, to record an album with the School's symphony orchestra of young musicians. Titled "Concertos From My Childhood," the CD contains five Concertos that every budding violinist plays early in his or her performing life. I can vouch for that fact personally: three of the five figured in my own early years as a violin student. One of them, the Concerto by Oskar Rieding, figures on Perlman's program at the Penthouse. It is

a juicy tidbit, full of lush writing for the violin and a joy to play.

The remainder of the program presents, for the most part, a compendium of music by some of the great violin virtuosi of the recent and distant past. Among them is one of the most challenging, finger-busting pieces in the repertory, the "Dance of the Goblins" by the 19th century Italian violin virtuoso, Antonio Bazzini. Fritz Kreisler will be represented by two works, his arrangement of "Caprice in A Minor" by another 19th century violin whiz, Henryk Wieniawski, and his own "Tambourine Chinoise". We'll also hear the haunting and lyrical "Nigun" from the Baal Shem Suite by Ernest Bloch.

The "Winter" movement from Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons" has a special place in Perlman's repertoire- and in the heart of any listener who has heard him play it! Many years ago, I referred to "The Four Seasons" as the Baroque period "Scheherazade"-by which I meant its musical tone painting is as vivid as the pictorial elements in Rimsky-Korsakoff's orchestral tour de force. And "Winter" is one of the most vivid of all. A sonnet, presumably of Vivaldi's own making, accompanies the score- roughly translated, it goes like this:

Icily shivering in the frosty blackness,
in the harsh breath of the terrible wind,
one hurries along, stamping one's feet,
teeth chattering in the extreme cold.

Spend the days by the fire, quiet and content,
while outside the rain saturates everything;
to walk on the ice, go slowly,
carefully, for fear of falling.

Step out boldly, you will fall to the ground;
go again, with vigorous steps,
until the ice breaks and disintegrates.

You feel the escape through the iron bars
of the Sirocco, the Borea, all the warring winds;
this is Winter, so dark, but full of pleasure.

And so our first LIVE FROM LINCOLN CENTER telecast of the New Year-
happening as it does in deepest, iciest New York winter- indeed promises to be
full of pleasures, a particularly warm, "family" occasion. The live event takes
place on Wednesday evening, January 5, at 8 PM Eastern time. A reminder:
check your local listings for the exact date and time in your area. See you then!