



FOR RELEASE

12.10.2008

Contact: April Thibeault, AMT P.R

april@amtpublicrelations.com

212.861.0990

American Organist Gail Archer Launches an Extensive Celebratory Concert Series in Honor of Felix Mendelssohn

“She plays[ed]... with a sense of vulnerability and awe.” New York Times

New York, NY— Known as one of the nation’s most esteemed concert organists, **Gail Archer** celebrates the bicentennial of composer Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) with a five-concert, five-month long (January-May ‘09) performance series exploring his primary organ works, the *Six Sonatas* (1845). In honor of the composer’s dual affiliation with both the Jewish and Christian faiths, Archer’s concerts will journey through some of Manhattan’s prominent religious institutions ranging from the Central Synagogue to St. Paul’s Chapel. In addition to Mendelssohn’s much beloved *Six Sonatas*, programming includes works by Fanny Mendelssohn (his sister with whom he had an especially close relationship, personally and artistically), Robert and Clara Schumann, Johannes Brahms, and Max Reger. Performance schedule below.

Hailed as “*an organist of exemplary taste*” (American Record Guide), Archer believes Mendelssohn’s organ sonatas are highly valued by both organists and the general public alike for their accessibility and sheer beauty. “*The Six Sonatas have always been among my favorite works from the 19th century. The hymns are the attraction for me. I grew up singing in church choirs and have known many of these melodies from my earliest years.*” Mendelssohn’s interest in the old German hymns and Bach’s music in particular, inspired his contemporaries and successors to compose organ works based on Protestant hymn tunes using traditional German counterpoint.

A German composer, pianist and conductor of the early Romantic period, Mendelssohn produced symphonies, concerti, oratorios, piano and chamber music, as well as organ music in which he played and composed for since the age of 11 to his death. After a long period of relative denigration due to changing musical tastes and anti-Semitism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, his creative originality is now being recognized and re-evaluated. “*Over the last 50 years, a new appreciation of Mendelssohn’s work has developed,*” explains Archer. “*I’m thrilled to be casting a spotlight not only on his music, but also the century-long vilification of his music and his tragically short life.*”

Gail Archer has quickly risen to become one of America’s most successfully renowned organists. Described as playing with “*authority, assertiveness, and rhythmic exactitude,*” the American Organist Magazine continues to say that her “*nearly technically faultless performances result in clarity of complex passagework and exciting moments of virtuosity.*” Known as an international concert organist, lecturer, and recording artist, Archer recently released her Grammy nominated album *A Mystic in the Making* (2007) following her 2005 debut CD *The Orpheus of Amsterdam, Seelinck, and his Pupils*.

-more-

Archer Celebrates Mendelssohn (con't.)

Contact: April Thibeault, AMT PR

212.861.0990

An active recitalist in both Europe and the United States, she was featured on organ series in Budapest, Turin, Hamburg, Poland, Germany, Italy and the Hague. She performs regularly at festivals worldwide including the Spoleto Festival in South Carolina and the Bach Festival in Florida. Archer currently serves as: College Organist at Vassar College; Chair of the Music Department at Barnard College, Columbia University; and holds positions at the Manhattan School of Music and Central Synagogue. For everything else, visit <http://www.gailarcher.com>.

General Tour & Ticket Information:

All Concerts are FREE and first come, first serve.

Wednesday, January 14th @ 7:30pm

Location: Central Synagogue. 123 East 55th Street (between Park & Lex). Train F/N/R/W/4/5/6 to 59th Street.

Program: *Sonata I* (Mendelssohn), *Sechs Fugen Uber den Namen Bach Op. 60, No. 5 & No. 6* (Robert Schumann), *Prelude for Organ in F Major* (Fanny Mendelssohn), *Elf Choralevorspiele* (Brahms), and *Fantasie und Fuge uber B-A-C-H* (Reger).

Info: For more info, visit <http://www.gailarcher.com>.

Wednesday, February 18th @ 7:30pm

Location: St. Paul's Chapel at Columbia University. 117th St. & Amsterdam Ave. Train 1 to Columbia University/Broadway.

Program: *Sonata II & Sonata III* (Mendelssohn), *Sechs Fugen Uber den Namen Bach* (Robert Schumann), *Elf Choralevorspiele* (Brahms), and *Fantasie uber den Choral* (Reger).

Info: For more info, call 212.854.0480 or visit <http://www.columbia.edu>.

Wednesday, March 11th @ 7:30pm

Location: Central Synagogue. 123 East 55th Street (between Park & Lex). Train F/N/R/W/4/5/6 to 59th Street.

Program: *Sonata IV* (Mendelssohn), *Prelude and Fugue for Organ* (Clara Schumann), *Sechs Fugen Uber den Namen Bach* (Robert Schumann), *Elf Choralevorspiele* (Brahms), *Fantasie uber den Choral* (Reger).

Info: For more info, visit <http://www.gailarcher.com>.

Wednesday, April 1st @ 7:30pm

Location: Temple Emanu-El, 1 East 65th Street (between 5th and Madison). Train F/N/R/W/4/5/6 to 63rd Street/Lex.

Program: *Sonata V* (Mendelssohn), *Sechs Fugen Uber den Namen Bach* (Robert Schumann), *Prelude and Fugue for Organ* (Clara Schumann), *Choralevorspiel und Fuge, O Traurigkeit, O Herzelied* (Brahms), and *Symphonische Fantasie und Fuge* (Reger).

Info: For more info, call 212-744-1400 or visit <http://www.emanuelnyc.org>

Wednesday, May 20th @ 7:30pm

Location: Central Synagogue. 123 East 55th Street (between Park & Lex). Train F/N/R/W/4/5/6 to 59th Street.

Program: *Sonata VI* (Mendelssohn), *Prelude for Organ in G Major* (Fanny Mendelssohn), *Sechs Fugen Uber den Namen Bach* (Robert Schumann), and *Consolation in E Major & Introduction, Variationen und Fuge uber ein Originalthema* (Reger).

Info: For more info, visit <http://www.gailarcher.com>.