

Aebersold and Neiweem In their own words

About our music

Whether at one or two pianos, our repertoire “has it all”—from charming confections for piano duet to the most profound essays by Mozart and Schubert. Our audiences can enjoy authentic performance versions of popular orchestral masterworks for a fraction of the cost of hiring a full symphony—works such as Holst’s “The Planets,” Brahms’s 1st Piano Concerto (in a wonderful version by the composer for one piano, four hands!), and Respighi’s “Fountains of Rome.” This surprising repertoire always brings us together with our audiences in an evening of discovery and a shared sense of enjoyment. Music for piano duo is also a visual treat—working out the choreography of four hands playing as one can be treacherous, but it’s a lot of fun to see as well as hear the final result!

About us

Music consumes our lives, but like all performers, we enjoy the simple pleasures of our breaks from practice: a long evening hike and viewing the sunset at our Door County, Wisconsin retreat, a great Italian meal, reading, and studying languages. We also save time for some very special people in our lives: our students. If we can instill in them some of the combined sense of wonder about music and living, we’ve succeeded in a big part of our mission. That’s why we are deeply involved in two summer music festivals in Chicago and Austria where we both perform and teach young pianists,

Ralph Neiweem
Claire Aebersold

Claire Aebersold and Ralph Neiweem

Piano Duo

Described as “consummate practitioners of pianism” (The Washington Post), Claire Aebersold and Ralph Neiweem enjoy an international career as exponents of music for both piano duet and two keyboards. Their innovative programming reflects the full gamut of this delightful repertoire, from four-hand works of Mozart, Schubert, and Brahms, to favorite lighter masterpieces by Poulenc and Milhaud, and contemporary works championed or commissioned by Aebersold and Neiweem.

Aebersold and Neiweem have been heard on television and radio, appeared with orchestras internationally, and they have been heard in recital in many cities throughout the USA and Europe, including more than 200 recitals throughout Tuscany and Umbria. Additionally, they have given master classes and workshops throughout the United States.

Aebersold and Neiweem’s CDs include “Four-Hand Reflections,” the world premiere recording of the Brahms Piano Concerto No. 1 in the composer’s own arrangement for one piano, four-hands, and volumes 1 and 2 of a complete traversal of Schubert’s four-hand music, praised by Gramophone Magazine as “utterly charming...warmly recommended.”

Claire Aebersold and Ralph Neiweem met in Italy in 1970 as young solo performers at a music festival in Umbria. They were married in 1973 and have devoted themselves to the exclusive study of the duo repertoire since 1981. Claire Aebersold is a native of Oak Ridge, Tennessee and is a graduate of the New England Conservatory. Ralph Neiweem hails from Evanston, Illinois and is a graduate of the Juilliard School. Both completed graduate studies at Northwestern University and received artist diplomas from Villa Schifanoia in Florence, Italy. Their common teachers include Irwin Freundlich, Theodore Lettvin, John Browning, and Orazio Frugoni, at whose urging they became a duo. They currently reside in Chicago, and are Artists-in-Residence at the Music Institute of Chicago.

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Aebersold and Neiweem celebrated 25 years before the public in 2006-07. They have been heard on RAI-TV Italy, PBS television, and on WFMT Radio in Chicago, where they performed an unprecedented series thirty live broadcast concerts covering virtually the complete four-hand repertoire of the 19th and 20th centuries. The duo has appeared with orchestras internationally, including the Chicago Philharmonic and the Vienna Tonkünstler. They have been heard in recital in many cities throughout the USA and Europe, including Chicago, New York, Detroit, Washington, D.C., Santa Fe, Vienna, Rome and Florence and the Ukraine. In Italy alone they have given over 200 recitals throughout Tuscany and Umbria. They have taken their two pianos to many community concert organizations throughout Midwestern USA and Canada. Recent concerts in New York include a pair of all-Schubert recitals at the Goethe Institute, and a 25th anniversary celebration concert at Merkin Hall. In 2005 they judged the 1st International Two-piano Competition “Twentyfingers” in Rome, Italy. Other highlights of the duo’s recent seasons include performances at the prestigious University of Vermont Lane Series, the Detroit Institute of Art, and the Gina Bachauer series in Salt Lake City, Utah. In October 2010 they performed at the Odessa, Ukraine International Festival “Duo Dialogues,” and gave their 10th recital at the International Music Festival “Pitten Classics” in Austria.

Aebersold and Neiweem are founders and directors of the NEA award-winning Chicago Duo-Piano Festival, held annually at the Music Institute of Chicago. They have given masterclasses and workshops at schools including Northwestern University, Dartmouth College, University of Vermont, University of Wisconsin, Northern Illinois University, Lawrence University, and have guested at MTNA State conventions. The duo has commissioned significant new works for the piano duo, including Joseph Turrin’s “Symmetries” for Two Pianos, “Great Movements” Sonata for piano, four hands and “Novel Dances” for two pianos by Patrick Byers. Aebersold and Neiweem’s CDs on the Summit label include the recently released “Four-Hand Reflections”, the world premiere recording of the Brahms Piano Concerto No. 1 in the composer’s own arrangement for piano, four-hands, and volumes 1 and 2 of a complete traversal of Schubert’s four-hand music, praised by Gramophone Magazine as “utterly charming...warmly recommended.” Their editions of four-hand arrangements by Brahms and Mendelssohn have been published by Dover, International, and they have written award-winning articles for Clavier Magazine.

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