

# Following Fialkowska



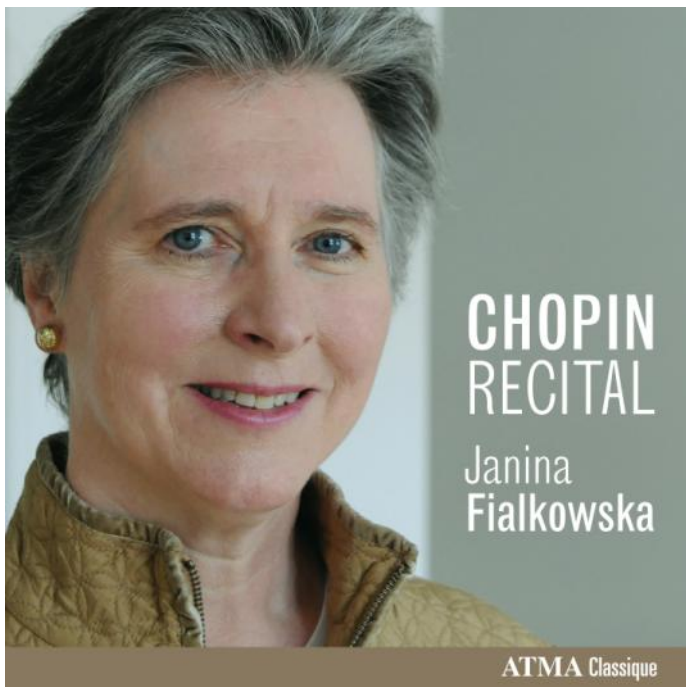
THE JANINA FIALKOWSKA NEWSLETTER

[www.fialkowska.com](http://www.fialkowska.com) [info@fialkowska.com](mailto:info@fialkowska.com)

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## ... the Art of Perfect Pianism

Outstanding reviews for Janina's latest CD "Chopin Recital" from leading music authorities: Norman Lebrecht (London), Russell Platt (THE NEW YORKER) and Joachim Kaiser (Sueddeutsche Zeitung, Munich)



**Norman Lebrecht, one of the classical music world's most influential commentators and award winning novelist, writes a detailed review of Janina's latest recording:** "Before Chopin Year floods us with tinklers in micro-skirts and Lang Lang duetting with Richard Clayderman, wrap your ears around the real thing. Janina Fialkowska, a Can-

adian, ran off with the first Arthur Rubinstein competition in 1974 and won a devoted following for her warm and intimate tone, so unlike the bangers and crashers of the competition circuit.

A tumour in her left arm forced a career break early in the present decade, but she's back now and more characterful than ever.

Her technique is fearless. Fialkowska takes the Grande valse brillante in F major as if it were the Moonlight sonata opening and she flickers through the waltzes, mazurkas and polonaises with the dazzle of a disco dancer. I particularly like her colour differentiations within the hackneyed old Minute Waltz, which I never expected to listen to again with pleasure.

Best of all is the B major nocturne, which she plays conversationally without extremes of quietude and pointless rubato pauses. This is high-class Chopin playing, deeply felt and demonstrably authentic. Fialkowska writes the booklet notes herself, with much the same directness, explaining her choices and contrasts in a language accessible to all."

Norman Lebrecht,  
"Lebrecht's weekly",  
[www.scenamusicale.org](http://www.scenamusicale.org),  
Dec. 16th, 2009

### Norman Lebrecht:

- "wrap your ears around the real thing"
- "... but she's back now and more characterful than ever"
- "... this is high-class Chopin playing, deeply felt and demonstrably authentic"

### Inside this issue:

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# More praise for the Chopin CD

## THE NEW YORKER



**FIALKOWSKA PLAYS CHOPIN WITH A WARMTH, POETRY, AND DETAIL OF PHRASING THAT IS DISAPPOINTINGLY RARE TODAY**

RUSSELL PLATT  
(THE NEW YORKER)

Only two days before the incredible Lebrecht review appeared, another leading music critic raved about Janina's "Chopin Recital" CD.

Russell Platt, classical music editor of THE NEW YORKER magazine and author of the "Classical Note" column, for which he writes several times a year a concentrated piece about two or three distinctive new recordings, added Janina's new CD as a "notable addi-

tion" to his "Chopin list" created in April 2009:

"Back in April I wrote "Chopin list", a piece that examined the composer's music in vivid interpretations by Vassily Primakov, Marc-André Hamelin, and Nadia Reisenberg (as well as a rather less-than-vivid Lang Lang). A few weeks ago another Chopin album floated into the office: a "Chopin Recital" from the distinguished Canadian pianist Janina Fialkowska. ...

Fialkowska plays Chopin with a warmth, poetry, and detail of phrasing that is disappointingly rare today; she places her gifts at the composer's feet. She moves through a selection of waltzes, preludes, and mazurkas with aplomb, which is hardly surprising since she began her career as a protégée of Arthur Rubinstein."

Russell Platt,  
The NEW YORKER (online)  
Dec. 14, 2009

## Sueddeutsche Zeitung, Munich

Prof. Dr. Joachim Kaiser is Germany's dean of Art critics and probably the last of the great German Renaissance men with his profound knowledge of not only music, but also literature and theater arts. In the field of music he is especially known for his expertise in piano works (author

of: "Great Pianists of our time") and particularly in the music of Chopin. He raved about Janina's Chopin Recital CD in the "Sueddeutsche Zeitung", the largest (and most respected) German daily subscription newspaper.

**Recently the pianist produced a Chopin CD. Brilliant and highly virtuoso recordings: waltzes, the A flat Ballade, the Barcarolle ... an unusual testimony of the Art of perfect pianism.**

Joachim Kaiser,  
Sueddeutsche Zeitung  
January 14th, 2010

## ClassicToday.com

In a catalog dominated by all-Chopin releases that focus upon complete works within a particular genre (the Sonatas, the Etudes, the Impromptus, and so forth), there's always room for a thoughtfully programmed and well executed mixed recital, such as this offering from Janina Fialkowska.

It begins with a C-sharp minor Op. 26 No. 1 Polonaise that evokes her mentor Arthur Rubinstein's swagger while also mining the music's darker corners. ... The F major Op. 34 No. 3's "dog chasing its tail" passagework and capri-

ciously-phrased middle section come alive with skittish bravura.

Little sustain pedal supports Fialkowska's nuanced finger legato in the C-sharp minor Waltz. She also is one of the few pianists on disc to play the Barcarolle's opening measures without treating the opening note as a pedal point. Throughout the work, Fialkowska's improvisatory ebb and flow never seems disjointed or mannered ...

Fialkowska plays the F-sharp minor Prelude outstandingly well, with long, singing lines and ideally clarified textural

strands. The Op. 62 No. 1 Nocturne is conceived on a large and serious scale by virtue of Fialkowska's wide dynamic range and rhetorical breadth, even when her trills effectively die down to hushed, intimate levels. She begins the E minor Op. 41 No. 2 Mazurka in hesitant brushstrokes that grow in volume and expressive bleakness, while the extroverted D major Mazurka Op. 33 No. 2's off-beat accentuations and angular lilt truly "Mazurk"! In all, a fine disc.

Jed Distler, ClassicToday.com  
December 2009



Visiting the "Bavarian Music Academy" in the foothills of the majestic Alps, site of Janina's "First International Piano Academy" which will take place for the first time in September 2010

**... ALL PLAYED WITH STYLISH CONFIDENCE AND UNDERLYING POWER**

JOHN TERAUDS  
THE TORONTO STAR

## Business not as usual

... and Janina thought this was going to be a "normal" concert for her family and friends in her adoptive home town of Augsburg, Germany, with the ultra supportive and friendly Augsburg Philharmonic and with a close friend, Wilhelm F. Walz, as concert master. The young Finnish conductor, Jan Soederblom, also proved to be a sympathetic accompanist.

But then, suddenly news came that Germany's most respected and "feared" dean of critics, Joachim Kaiser of Germany's most important daily newspaper, had listened to Janina's latest Chopin CD at his home in Munich, had been extremely im-

pressed and wanted to hear her "live" immediately. That the elderly gentleman should be willing to make the long trip in the middle of winter to a place he hadn't visited in decades, was unheard of and caused quite a stir, to say the least.

Also, despite the most horrible blizzard that had been blowing the entire day and causing chaos on the roads, the hall was virtually full (1400 seats). People from all over Germany and from neighboring countries like France, Austria and Switzerland had braved the storm to hear Janina's Chopin concerto. It was a huge success, with Mr. Kaiser as well, and

the applause was prolonged and loud. The circumstances were less dramatic for the second night, but the success was just as great. Altogether an unusually wonderful experience for Janina.

**"Stupendous ... irresistibly virtuoso ... enormous applause. The whole audience was transported. Amazed, we experienced what Chopin demands, how his difficult, rich, and mysterious art still has such an impact."**

Joachim Kaiser  
Sueddeutsche Zeitung,  
Munich, Jan 14, 2010



Among the many prominent VIPs in the audience at the Augsburg concerts was a dear friend: 88-year old legendary soprano and former star of the Vienna State Opera, Sena Jurinac, von Karajan's Octavian, in his famous film of Richard Strauss' "Rosenkavalier"

## Warmly welcomed in Dublin

Janina's Irish debut, broadcast live from Dublin's National Concert Hall, was a triumph with the audience, the orchestra and the conductor. The Irish Times (Dec.7, 2009) praised "the tonally refined soloist" for her "always beautiful-sounding approach ... aiming for a kind of classical balance that could accommodate moments of impetuosity." For her Mozart concerto (K. 491) she got the

perfect accompaniment from the glorious sounding RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra under the baton of the marvelously sensitive Mozart conductor Gerhard Markson.

Before her arrival Janina had been already warmly welcomed by the Irish as one of their own.

Digging into the roots of the maternal side of her family, journalist Frank McNally

found Janina's ancestor who left the Emerald Island in 1816 to set out for the New World. He also reported on this man's illustrious offspring who became leading Canadian financiers, down the line to Janina's grandfather, Dr. John L. Todd, Canada's first Professor of Parasitology, the man who discovered the deadly mission of the tsetse fly as a carrier of Africa's dreaded "sleeping sickness".



Janina in front of Dublin's National Concert Hall

**THE TONALLY  
REFINED SOLOIST**  
THE IRISH TIMES

## Pianist highlights romantic evening

The big event for the evening was the return of Janina Fialkowska on piano performing Chopin's Concerto No.1 in e minor, op.11. Prior to health problems sidelining her for much of a decade, Fialkowska was a frequent soloist with the KWS — for performer and audience this was a coming home of sorts.

Having built much of her pianistic reputation as a romantic interpreter, Fialkowska did not disappoint. She managed the fast-flowing, cascading lines (of which there were many) with both muscular precision and supple musicality, her obvious mastery of technique gave her ample interpretive breathing room.

She also relished the opportunities to engage the slower, simpler melodies with a feeling of sweetness and joy in the nuance. Overall, the pianist performed with a feeling of seemingly effortless grace which was warm, genuine and inviting.

The Record, Nov. 30th, 2009



Janina with Edwin Outwater, the charismatic young conductor of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony who has brought the orchestra to an exciting new level of excellence



## CONTACT:

### PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE WORLDWIDE:

Harry Oesterle  
(+1 (203) 858 4548 (EST)  
info@fialkowska.com  
www.fialkowska.com

### PR Contacts



#### Canada

Luisa Trisi  
Big Picture Communications  
(416) 481-1161  
ltrisi@sympatico.ca



#### UK

Nicky Thomas  
Media Consultancy  
+44 7768 566530  
info@nickythomasmedia.com



#### Germany

Dr. Silvia Merk  
Musik-PR und  
Kommunikation  
+49 (02247) 69 877  
www.merk-pr.de

and

Peter Hofmann  
peter.hofmann@  
fialkowska.com



#### Japan

Eurassic Tokyo Inc.  
Artists & Concert  
Management  
Yuichi Murakami  
1-17-3,103 Uehara Shibuya  
Tokyo,151-0064 Japan  
(+81-(0)3-3481-8636  
Fax +81-(0)3-3481-8620  
jopjo1756@estate.ocn.ne.jp

## Highlight of the decade - highlight of the year

### Looking back and looking forward - Janina is part of it all

The classical music establishment based in New York may smile a little condescendingly on the two honors Janina recently received in her native Canada, but their condescension is based on ignorance! The fact is that Canadian newspapers, unlike so many of their US counterparts, still give classical music decent ... and intelligent coverage and we are not just talking about Toronto and Montreal.

Two of these newspapers, the Winnipeg Free Press and the Ottawa citizen recently honored Janina by proclaiming one of her appearances "Highlight of the decade" (Winnipeg) and predicting another as one of the top ten musical events of this year (Ottawa).

Winnipeg is home to two top orchestras, a world-renowned ballet and theatre as well as numerous chamber- and recital series etc. etc.

Ottawa's Pinchas Zukerman, the legendary violinist and current Music Director of the

National Arts Centre Orchestra, acts as a magnet, drawing in all the major talents of the classical music world to Canada's capital city. Not to mention all the other things going on at the National Arts Centre (Theatre, Opera, Dance ...). And there is no doubt that Ottawa can be called the Chamber music capital of North America!

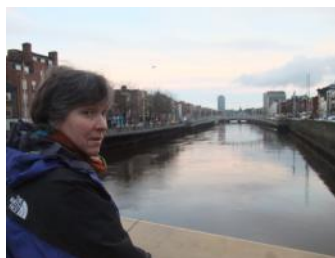
This is why Janina feels extremely honored to find herself so prominently mentioned in the Winnipeg Free Press' retrospective on Winnipeg's most memorable performing-arts stages "stand out" moments of the first decade of this millennium.

But we are not just talking here of past triumphs, but a prediction for the future. In Ottawa Janina sees herself in the company of artists such as Prima donna Renée Fleming, star conductor Valery Gergiev and Pinchas Zukerman in an article of the Ottawa Citizen offering its recommendation for "10 classical concerts to savour" in 2010. Janina's all-Chopin

recital in May is the only solo recital on this select list.

**I'll never forget Canadian pianist Janina Fialkowska with the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra in September 2006. Already known worldwide for her formidable technique and sublime artistry, the Montreal-born musician defied all odds by returning to a full performing, teaching and recording schedule a mere two years after a cancer diagnosis that required several delicate surgeries on her left arm. Not only did Beethoven's Piano Concerto, No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 37 showcase her strength on so many levels, her stirring performance also spoke to the healing power of music. This concert burns brightest among the hundreds I've seen over the past 10 years.**

Holly Harris,  
Free Press music critic  
December 31, 2009



Exploring Dublin



With Lord and Lady Weidenfeld in New York City



Judging at the Busoni International Piano competition in Italy