IU Southeast Faculty Member Performs at Germany’s Wangen Chamber Music Festival

In August, IU Southeast professor of Music Joanna Goldstein traveled to Germany to perform in Wangener Kammermusikwoche 1994, the week-long chamber music festival sponsored by the city of Wangen-im-Allgau and organized by the faculty of the Wangen Conservatory of Music. Dr. Goldstein’s participation in the August 13-21 international music festival was supported, in part, by an Office of International Programs Overseas Conference Fund Grant to assist IU faculty in attending major professional meetings that are held abroad.

Goldstein, who earned her Master’s degree from the Julliard School and her doctorate from New York University, is a pianist who has appeared in solo performances with the Philadelphia Orchestra and New York’s Washington Square Chamber Ensemble, as well as the Albany, Scottsdale, Atlanta, and Louisville symphony orchestras. A faculty member in Indiana University Southeast’s Humanities Division since 1982, Goldstein is the founder and pianist of the Kentucky Center Chamber Players—a mixed chamber ensemble of six core members and guest artists that performs works for varied instrumental and vocal combinations. This year, the Chamber Players are performing their eleventh subscription season of a four-concert series presented at Louisville’s Kentucky Center for the Arts and the University of Louisville. The ensemble also presents both formal and educational concert tours in Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio.

The organizers of Germany’s 1994 Wangen chamber music festival invited Goldstein to perform in two concerts in which the piano assumes a prominent role—one a sonata program and the other, a program of trios and quartets that featured the world premiere of a trio by Rumanian composer Ivan Shekov. She arrived August 7 to begin a week of intensive rehearsal, of at least eight hours daily, in preparation for the two performances. On August 13, Goldstein performed in a well-attended 'sonata evening' presented at the newly restored Castle Achberg, near Ravensburg. The program featured three major works: a Shostakovitch Sonata for Viola and Piano, Beethoven’s Piano Sonata in C Minor, Op.111, and the Franck Sonata for Violin and Piano. As an encore, the ensemble played a selection from Max Reger’s Trio for Viola, Violin, and Piano.

On August 17, with the addition of a cellist, the chamber group presented a quartet program in the Stadthalle (Civic Center) of the medieval city of Wangen-im-Allgau. This program included Beethoven’s Piano Quartet, Op.16; the world premiere of a trio sonata for piano, violin, and viola by Ivan Shekov; and Brahms’ Piano Quartet in G minor, Op.25. This concert was well-received, reported the music reviewer of Germany’s Schwäbische Zeitung, who particularly commended Goldstein for her performance of the Brahms’ Piano Quartet: “It is a highly dramatic work wherein the piano plays a dominant role, always as a solo, never as a simple accompaniment instrument. The first movement is a sonata in itself with no less than five themes. Joanna Goldstein showed her understanding of the spirit of ‘absolute music’ with unabated power.”

In reflecting upon her participation in the Wangen chamber music festival, Goldstein states, “I was pleased with the programs and look forward to the possibility of being invited back. I appreciate very much the support of the university in providing funds that allowed me to play in Germany, as this kind of experience in Europe is very important and prestigious in my field.” Goldstein also feels that her involvement in this performance event ultimately benefits her students at IU Southeast, as well. “My experience in learning and performing new repertoire has an immediate impact on my students in my increased ability to discuss new music and different performing techniques. The influence of other performing styles is also reflected in my increased understanding of my art.”