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Classic couple

Hard work, not flash, fuels the success of power pair David Finckel and Wu Han

BY JENNIFER BARRETT
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They've been called the power couple of chamber music and they look seriously high-fashion in their publicity photos. But pianist Wu Han and cellist David Finckel say that's not who they are.

"That . . . absolutely has nothing to do with us at all," said Wu Han with a laugh in an interview from the New York dance studio where the couple's daughter takes lessons. "We are just

very hardworking and ambitious."

But they're hardly the average American family. Wu Han and Finckel perform more than

150 concerts a year — together, as soloists and, for

Finckel, with the prestigious Emerson String Quartet. They produce, perform, edit and package CDs on their own label, ArtistLed.

See **POWER COUPLE**, D6

Hear music history unfold .

● **Cellist David Finckel and pianist Wu Han** will perform "The Unfolding of Music," Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. at Libby Gardner Concert Hall, University of Utah. Tickets: \$20, \$5 (students); 801-581-7100 or <http://www.kingsburyhall.org>



Power couple wedded to hard work

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They founded and run Music@Menlo, a summer festival in the Silicon Valley. And they are the artistic directors of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Oh, and they have an 11-year-old daughter, Lilian, with whom Wu Han practices the piano daily and carts to and from dance lessons.

On Tuesday, the couple will perform at Libby Gardner Hall presented by the Chamber Music Society of Salt Lake City and the Virtuoso Series at the University of Utah.

Starting their own label in 1997 was groundbreaking in

classical music, and, some feared, a little crazy.

"I had to give my manager a big bottle of scotch to convince him that this was the right thing to do," said Wu Han. "So few classical musicians these days can have the privilege like sively over the Internet, at <http://www.artistled.com>, although Finckel's recordings with the Emerson are still sold through traditional outlets. Finckel hated walking into a music store and seeing classical music relegated to a quiet corner. "In the big store, whoever had the biggest marketing budget had the loudest voice," said Wu Han. The Internet, on the other hand, offers a level playing field.

Loyal fans already have purchased a few hundred copies of the couple's just-released Brahms CD. And they tote many of the couple's seven other releases to concerts to have them signed.

Wu Han and Finckel have ac-

quired a solid fan base that appreciates the couple's musical chemistry.

"Before we were married, before we were even romantically involved, before I could even speak English, a lot of people would come to a concert and ask, are you guys married?" recalls Wu Han, a native of Taiwan.

"We are really privileged to live together and to make music together," she said. "I know a lot of couples who are married who find it impossible to play together. They will fight to the last second."

For their Salt Lake concert, the couple will perform a program titled "The Unfolding of Music." It begins with Bach and traces musical language development through history, ending with Britten.

"By the time you reach the contemporary, it seems so logical," said Wu Han. "Audiences have usually just loved it."