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**May 31, 2007**

**Sokolov Plays Conservatorio G. Verdi (He Won)**



Opera Chic is back tonight from a late night passed at Conservatorio G. Verdi where she basked in the glory of Grigory Sokolov's piano recital in the white belly of that huge auditorium on via Conservatorio. The program consisted of Franz Schubert's Sonata in C minor D 958 which was played technically beyond-perfect, and suffused with tenderness and a wide range of color. The usual thirty-two minute composition (with four movements) took much longer under the careful caress of Sokolov, clocking-in at around forty. His pedal work is outstanding...his legato, his staccato, his transpositions...everything. He is appassionato in the fullest sense, and this performance quickly erased all prior memories of Barenboim's momentous (but hey, kinda

sloppy and heavy-handed) recital two nights ago at La Scala.

The second half of the program was, um, okay...a selection of Aleksandr Nikolaevich Skrjabin works with only a few standouts (not at the fault of the superb Sokolov, but my own incapacity to really get into Skrjabin). One "mistake" (we use this ironically) of Sokolov was launching directly into the astounding, trompe l'oeil splendor of "Opus 9 Prelude and Nocturne for the Left Hand", which demonstrated so much of his endless talent and received so much applause, that the following four program pieces sent the entire audience into proper applause etiquette confusion, with half the auditorium tepidly applauding, and the other half shushing them during each subsequent piece. jokes on us all. Again, his presentation of the Skrjabin work for the left hand was insane, his right hand hanging idly at his side. His phrasing and mastery of mixing legato with brighter staccato and spirito was beyond words. He used the voice of his left hand to mind-bogglingly sound like two. The Sonata No. 3 Opus 23 was also a standout, leaving the remaining works (Due Poemi Opus 69, Sonata No. 10 Opus 70, and Vers la flamme Opus 72) a bit of a chore (OC wanted the delicious encore already).



Six bis were given, starting with a sweet andante Frédéric Chopin's Prelude in E Minor, and then including another Chopin waltz, Liszt, Beethoven, Brahms, which all brought standing ovations. Opera Chic is just glad she was able to catch this great pianist play live in such a beautiful city that cherishes its musicians.

btw, we found one of [Jessica's](#) 2005 Sokolov performance reviews on a [Sokolov website](#), and [we love this quote](#): "And although he's a big bear of a man, he can be as graceful as a ballet dancer (take the hand crossings in the Schubert) and create sounds as delicate as a hummingbird." It's a wonderful quote because it's true! He's just perfect.

Now here's a picture of some random ladies mobbing the vendor in the

lobby of Conservatorio after the show for Sokolov discs vvvvvvv



Posted by opera chic on May 31, 2007 at 02:46 AM | [Permalink](#)

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Thanks for the plug, OC! Hearing Sokolov play a few years ago completely changed the way I hear and think of the piano and its music. And since I trained as a pianist and edited a piano magazine for 5 years in the mid 90s, that was quite a shock. He's that kind of genius... He is playing here in London at the Wigmore Hall next week, but the concert has been sold out for months.

Posted by: [Jessica](#) | [May 31, 2007 at 12:29 PM](#)

We loved the recital! And your review that I linked was excellent!

Posted by: [Opera Chic](#) | [May 31, 2007 at 01:46 PM](#)