



Title: Chamber music at the academy
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Chamber music at the academy

It was given a caressing performance by the series' artistic directors violinist András Keller and pianist Dénes Várjon, along with János Pilz and Judit Szabó of the Keller Quartet.

In principle, a bagatelle is a short, light trifle, a throw-away. But these little movements, quickly but boldly sketching different Romantic moods with Bohemian melodic colors, are anything but.

Each spoke profoundly and eloquently in Dvorák's most lyrical vein.

At the other end of the concert - and at the other end of the spectrum - pianists Várjon and Izabella Simon, with Amadinda percussionists Zoltán Rácz and Aurél Holló, played the acerbic, Modern, sharply incised Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion by Béla Bartók.

Far from being technically less demanding house music, the sonata demands four virtuoso musicians, and was written to put Bartók and his pianist wife Ditta before the concert public.

This work, too, received an exemplary, invigorating performance, with the percussionists playing this extremely complex and intricate work largely from memory.

In between, other works by Dvorák and Enescu made up the balance, but were overshadowed by the beauty and power of the bookend pieces.

Flutist Orsolya Kaczander and pianist Simon played Enescu's attractive but not overly impressive Cantabile e presto, as well as Dvorák's strangely cold and classical Sonatina, op 100.

The Keller Quartet gave a fine rendition of Dvorák's American String Quartet in F major.

More impressive

Another concert presented by Strém Koncert, in conjunction with Jacobi Koncert, and perhaps even more impressive than the one just mentioned, was the recital by Russian pianist Grigory Sokolov, part of the Magyar Telekom Musical Evenings series The Piano, on Mar 10.

Sokolov gave a remarkable and rather unorthodoxly bouncy performance of the late Sonata in C minor by Franz Schubert.

It was a clean and carefully thought-out interpretation, which gave clarity to the structure, while removing the traditional layers of sentiment that have long encrusted the surface of this marvellous, emotional work. The last movement was particularly enthralling.

Sokolov's glistening, effervescent performances of sonatas, preludes and other works by Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915) were all the more welcome because Scriabin's music is unjustly ignored here in Hungary.

This strange, rarefied, visionary and mystical music is rarely performed by Hungarian pianists and orchestras.

The early Prelude and Nocturne for left hand, op 9, written at a time when Scriabin had injured his right hand from practicing too much, said more than many composers would be able to express using two hands.

Flame-like

Sokolov's flame-like and evanescent performance of the Sonata No 10, op 70 was the highlight for me.

Surely everyone loves staring into a crackling, blazing bonfire, watching the glimmering embers fly up into the night sky, only to be lost in the multitude of the stars.

Sokolov's interpretation was like that. And he was extremely generous with the encores by Scriabin and Chopin.

Sokolov will return in next year's series The Piano. Other performers will include Murray Perahia, Piotr Anderszewski, Kirill Gerstein and Dezső Ránki.

Season and individual tickets are available at the box office of the Academy of Music, tel: 342-0179.

The next concert of the Sándor Végh Musical Evenings series will be on May 1, and will feature the world-famous Hungarian soprano Andrea Rost in songs by Enescu, as well as chamber music by Dvorák and Bartók.