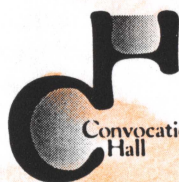


Visiting Artist
Martin Kasík, piano

Co-sponsored by
Czechoslovak Society of Arts
and Sciences of Alberta,
The Polish Cultural Society of Edmonton,
and The Canadian Centre for Austrian
and Central European Studies

Saturday, February 19, 2000
at 8:00 pm



Convocation
Hall

Arts Building
University of Alberta

Program



Department of Music
University of Alberta

Welcoming address by Mr Andrew Kobos

Program

French Suite No. 6 in E Major, BWV 817 Johann Sebastian Bach
Allemande (1685-1750)

Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Gavotte
Polonaise
Bourrée
Minuet
Gigue

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Kreisleriana, Op. 16 (1838) | Robert Schumann |
| Ausserst bewegt | (1810-1856) |

Ausserst bewegt
Sehr innig und nicht zu rasch
Sehr aufgeregt
Sehr langsam
Sehr lebhaft
Sehr langsam
Sehr rasch
Schnell und spielend

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| Three Czech dances (1929) | Bohuslav Martinů |
| Okračák | (1890-1959) |
| Dupák | |
| Polka | |

Intermission

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Mazurkas, Op. 24 (1834-5) | Frédéric Chopin |
| No. 1 in G Minor | (1810-1849) |

No. 1 in G Minor
No. 2 in C Major
No. 4 in B-Flat Minor

Ballade in G Minor, Op. 23 (1831) Frédéric Chopin

Andante spianato et Grande Polonaise
Brillante in E-flat Major, Op. 22 (1834)

Martin Kasik was born in Frenstat in the Czech Republic in 1976. He started playing the piano at the age of four and at 15 was admitted to the Conservatoire in Ostrava. After graduating in 1997, he entered the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague under Professor Ivan Klanasky. Masterclasses took him to Paris and elsewhere to study with Lazer Berman, Eugen Indjic, Paul Badura-Skoda, Christian Zacharias and Walter Groppenberger.

He has been awarded prizes throughout his studies, culminating in the 1998 award of the Josef Hlavka Prize given to the best Czech university student.

He has won first prize in several national and international piano competitions, including the Frederick Chopin Competition in Marienbad (both under 18 and under 28 categories), the International Piano Competition in Kil, Sweden, the 1998 International "Prague Spring" Competition, the 1998 Young Concert Artists European Auditions in Leipzig, Germany and the 1999 Young Concert Artists Worldwide Auditions in New York.

He has performed with orchestras throughout the Czech Republic and has given solo recitals in his home country as well as in Austria, France, Germany, Poland and Switzerland. He has recorded works by JS Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Rachmaninoff and Schumann for compact disc, and his recitals have been broadcast on radio and television in several countries.

WELCOME, MARTIN KASIK, TO EDMONTON
Convocation Hall of the University of Alberta
Saturday, February 19, 2000

Our esteemed Czech guest this evening, Mr Martin Kasik, has been the focus of attention of music aficionados for a number of years. His admirers in the Czech Republic are no exception. Even more contemporary media, e.g. Music & Sound (Hudba a zvuk), a weekly internet column prepared for three years by Dr Lubomir Fendrych and published in Prague at <http://pes.eunet.cz/hudba/hudba.htm>, brings Mr Kasik's achievements regularly to the attention of its readers. Music & Sound is part of a Czech internet daily, Invisible Dog (Neviditelný pes), which, although less than four years old, has welcomed almost eight million visitors to its web site at <http://pes.eunet.cz>. As both Music & Sound and Invisible Dog are published only in Czech, we will attempt to share with you the reviews in translation, as well as music samples of Mr Kasik's interpretations which you can listen to on internet in RealAudio (RA 3.0 or higher - 8 kHz, stereo).

FINALLY, A CZECH PIANIST AGAIN

(An interview with Martin Kasik by Dr Lubomir Fendrych)
Music & Sound, No. 46, June 23, 1998
<http://pes.eunet.cz:89/hudba/0623hud.htm>

At the Prague Spring Festival 1998, there was an international competition for piano and quartets featuring an international jury and participants from all over the world. Sixty-six pianists were registered and most of them attended. The requirements were interesting and seem to me to increase each year. I do not know if, under such pressure, even some of the more experienced competitors would survive.

The competition consisted of three rounds: the first one called for a Chopin Ballad or Scherzo, a Smetana Etude (one of two), as well as a selection of Etudes by Rachmaninoff, Debussy and Scriabin. Only fifteen pianists advanced to the second round and besides playing sonatas by Mozart, Beethoven, and G. Klein, they were asked to present a free choice recital of about sixty minutes in length. Into the third round, only three performers advanced and here they performed a selection from Classic and Romantic concertos for piano and orchestra. Martin Kasik won first prize.

He was born in 1976 and at the Prague Academy of Music Arts he is only in his first year of studies under Professor Klansky. As we talked together, I learned that Martin Kasik is a goal-oriented musician and undeniably modest. He has his own plans but, as far as music is concerned, he is open to comments and criticisms. In the way he plays, there can be very few to compare with him. One listens because, with his interpretation, he really tells us something. However, the important thing is that he himself shows a healthy dissatisfaction. Thus he has the very best prerequisites to begin his career. He brought me his recordings from the competition. Although they were on cassette, they were excellent; they were, after all, recorded there by Czech Radio. I selected a sample from the concert, Rachmaninoff's Sonata No. 2, Op. 36. The recording shows obvious musicality, perception of style, but surprisingly, no nervousness.

We will probably meet Martin Kasik again. In two years time, there will be the Chopin Festival in Warsaw... Meanwhile, we wish him lots of success.

Music Sample in RealAudio 3.0 (or higher) - 8 kHz, stereo:
Prague Spring Music Festival 1998 - the competition concert
Sergei Rachmaninoff: Sonata No. 2, Op. 36 (rev. 1931),
First Movement - file size 966 kB
http://pes.eunet.cz:89/hudba/ukazky/haz46_05.ra

Music & Sound, No. 69, December 1, 1998
<http://pes.eunet.cz:89/hudba/1201hud.htm>

MARTIN KASIK SPIELT FREDERYK CHOPIN

Review by Dr Lubomir Fendrych

CD Innovatio, Czech Radio Ostrava
Nocturnes in C sharp minor and D flat major, Op 27
Ballade in G minor
Scherzo in B flat minor
Grande Valse Brillante in A flat major
Polonaise in C minor
Andante Spianato et Grande Polonaise Brillante, Op 22

Music Sample in RealAudio 3.0 (or higher) - 8 kHz, stereo:
Fr. Chopin, Grande Valse Brillante - file size 726 kB
http://pes.eunet.cz/hudba/ukazky/haz69_05.ra

This is a quite demanding program, not just for technique but also for necessary maturity. This young pianist, who has already collected a number of prizes, was at the time of this recording just twenty years old. This repertoire will play a crucial role later in his career. As this CD is published on a rather obscure (though not unobtainable) label, I must emphasize that that this is a musically honest piece of work without overstated virtuosity. All too often in Chopin concerts and recordings I hear only virtuosity. Here there is good technique but the interpreter is obviously trying to say something more. For this he is still not yet experienced or seasoned enough. In conclusion, this is an interesting and stimulating title, with a well recorded piano.

Music & Sound, No. 119, November 16, 1999
<http://pes.internet.cz/hudba/1116hud.htm>

MARTIN KASIK: LIVE FROM PRAGUE

Review by Dr Lubomir Fendrych

Ultraphon CD: UP 0018

Schumann: Kreisleriana
Rachmaninoff: Sonata No 2 for Piano, Op 36
Preludes No 1 and 2, Op 23

Music Sample in RealAudio 3.0 (or higher) - 8 kHz, stereo:
Rachmaninoff: Preludes No. 2 Maestoso (file size 562 kB)
<http://pes.eunet.cz/hudba/ukazky/haz119c.ram>

We have Kasik here again, with live recordings of composers who suit him: Schumann obviously, with his relaxing fantasies which have attracted so many pianists, and Rachmaninoff, who attracts Kasik most probably for his sound. Both composers were excellent pianists so that, even today, it is possible somehow to compare oneself with them. Schumann is played with possibly too much zest, although with the necessary nuances. If I were very strict, I would beg in places for somewhat more reflection. Technique, even bravura, is here aplenty, even contrast. *Kreisleriana* is program music and it is not easy to convey this to listeners who today know almost nothing about Hoffmann and his tales about the eccentric artist, Kreisler. Fortunately it is not necessary to know so much in this regard, as this collection of fantasies is captivating music.

Rachmaninoff's Sonata is late Romantic music intended to a certain degree to represent the author as both composer and pianist. Both Preludes make a somewhat pedestrian impression compared to other war horses: they are here rather as an ornament. But even here, the temperament of the interpreter is clearly shown. This composition demands a lot and this is met quite successfully: the technique is sure-footed, the sound colour well differentiated. It must be emphasized that these are live recordings (from Lichtenstein Palace) with limited opportunities to edit afterwards. In this respect we must praise the good work of the recording team, giving the sound of the piano adequate conviction.

CZECH PIANIST MARTIN KASIK: A SUCCESSFUL DEBUT IN NEW YORK

The Young Concert Artists agency in New York, seeking promising young talent for American concert halls, presented Martin Kasik to their listeners in a completely sold out venue. The enthusiastically received recital offered solo compositions of JS Bach, Robert Schumann, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Frederic Chopin, and Bohuslav Martinu. Martin Kasik has played the piano since the age of four. The debut in New York is part of his tour of the USA and Canada.

(For the Czech version of the text above, send a brief e-mail to yosahlo@v-wave.com. At the same address you can request a free subscription to "Invisible Dog by e-mail", in Czech language only, currently mailed to 3000 subscribers six times a week. It is available in two versions, one with Czech accents and the other without accents (in ASCII only).

MAREK JABLONSKI (1939 -1999)

Piano music filled Marek Jablonski's world almost entirely. For him it was his greatest, and perhaps his only love, passion, escape and truth.

Marek loved young, talented people and it always gave him a deep satisfaction to pass his musical passion and experience on to them. He was able to instantly recognise the genuine young artist, his or her kindred spirit, "soul brothers" as he called them, to whom he provided inspiration and a multi-layered insight into music. He was the long-time teacher of many outstanding younger concert pianists, such as Jon Kimura Parker, Kevin Fitzgerald, Bernadene Blaha and Francine Kay. They all, most sincerely, attribute their successes to the teaching Marek provided to them.

In June 1996, Jon Kimura Parker said from the Carnegie Hall stage: "One thing kept me coming back to the Banff Center for the Arts for many summers in a row -- the opportunity to study with Marek Jablonski, one of the world's leading proponents of the music of Chopin." After Marek died, Parker wrote: "Marek Jablonski has been my teacher, mentor and friend. I am forever indebted to Marek for many things. He taught me to respect and to respond to my emotions, and to freely express them in my playing." Marek himself claimed that he experienced "an incredible emotional bloodbath" when playing Chopin's Ballades, Scherzos, Sonatas, and Polonaises; the bloodbath which, according to him, was inherently and deliberately put there by Chopin.

Many other voices have spoken about Marek Jablonski's piano performance over the years:

"Virtuosity on a grand scale and presented with unfailing dignity distinguished the playing of the Polish-Canadian pianist Marek Jablonski at Wigmore Hall." (Peter Stadlen, *The Daily Telegraph*, London)

"Marek Jablonski proved himself a representative of a Chopin tradition most truly Polish, in the great manner of Paderewski, Rubinstein and Malcuzynski." (Jerzy Waldorff, Warsaw)

"We left the concert with a new experience of something great, enchanting, exhilarating, which is the effect that only a true artist can produce." (*Politika*, Belgrade)

Years later, all this could result in nothing less than Robert Silverman's summary written upon Marek's death:

Marek Jablonski was the most musical pianist this country has known. His playing was steeped in central-and eastern-European performing traditions where phrasing and a warm, beautiful tone are of paramount importance and a glistening technique means something other than sheer speed delivered with machine-gun rapidity. ... His interpretations, while personal, were authoritative and totally persuasive. His effect upon an audience ... was riveting. The oft-noted similarities between his playing and that of Arthur Rubinstein were unmistakable: as the saying goes, he allowed us to breathe only when he wanted us to.

Marek Jablonski played predominantly Chopin, but not exclusively. He also played the music of Liszt, Brahms, Beethoven, Mozart, Schubert, Albinez, Szymanowski and Rachmaninow. However, Chopin unfailingly remained at the core of Marek Jablonski's repertoire. It was his catharsis, his purification. For Marek, Chopin "was like a great canvas, depicting human inner being, as if looking out from one's interior." Marek would often sit at the piano and play *Mazurkas* which he regarded to be "original, pure music of unique sound and of exquisite beauty which will last and last."

Marek Jablonski died on May 8, 1999 in Edmonton after a long and extremely courageous struggle with spine cancer. Marek once said "that the most important thing which remains after an artist, a concert pianist, is people's memory." Marek's music, Marek's Chopin, Marek's ideals and personality shall be retained in the minds of those who listened to his concerts. This is the true gift Marek Jablonski left behind.

Andrew M. Kobos



For information regarding upcoming events, please contact the Department of Music, Fine Arts Building 3-82.

Please note: All concerts and events are subject to change without notice.

Please call 492-0601 to confirm concerts (after office hours a recorded message will inform you of any changes to our schedule).