



from
Young Concert Artists, Inc.

BENJAMIN MOSER, *Pianist*

The New York Times

Fiery Momentum on the Keys

By Vivien Schweitzer

March 28, 2008

Jury and audience members sometimes differ on who merits first prize in music competitions. The 26-year-old German pianist Benjamin Moser won the audience favorite prize at last year's International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, but placed fifth in the official lineup. That year he also won the Young Concert Artists International Auditions, and the organization presented him in his New York recital debut on Tuesday at Zankel Hall, part of the Young Concert Artists Series.

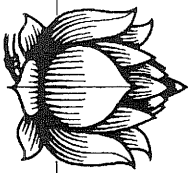
Mr. Moser, who also won the award for best interpretation of a work by Tchaikovsky in Moscow, seemed in his element playing "October" and "January" from Tchaikovsky's "Seasons," a warmly intimate work written soon after the thunderous piano concerto.

His technique and musicality were shown to fine effect in Scriabin's Chopinesque "Two Pieces for the Left Hand," in which Scriabin, who had injured his right hand, gives both melody and accompaniment to the left one. In Mr. Moser's eloquent performance it seemed as if two hands were playing. Both of them

flew across the keys in his passionate, colorful rendition of the composer's tumultuous Fantasy in B minor (Op. 28).

The program also included "Elis: Three Night Pieces" by Heinz Holliger, primarily known as a superb oboist. Written in 1961 when he was studying composition with Pierre Boulez, the work takes its inspiration from the writings of the symbolist poet Georg Trakl, who committed suicide in 1914 at age 27. Trakl based many of his poems on Elis Froebom, a 17th-century Swedish miner who died in a mine on his wedding day. Mr. Moser gracefully played the three short abstract movements, which at times reflect the influence of Berg and Schoenberg.

For encores, Mr. Moser, who was certainly an audience favorite on Tuesday, offered a fiery, virtuosic rendition — notable for its crystalline articulation and driving momentum — of the third movement from Prokofiev's Piano Sonata No. 7 and a whimsical interpretation of the first movement of Schumann's "Kinderszenen."



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KENNEDY CENTER RECITAL DEBUT

The Washington Post

THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 2008

Music

From Pianist Benjamin Moser, Single-Handed Finesse



"This is pretty atonal," pianist Benjamin Moser teasingly warned the audience about Heinz Holliger's death-haunted "Elis: Three Night Pieces" at his Young Concert Artists recital at the Terrace Theater on Tuesday. "I hope you won't be too scared."

There was certainly nothing scary in his reading of this cryptic music. Indeed, he played it with such fragile beauty, and invested the score's many silences with such tension and

Benjamin Moser brought a lustrious touch to the Terrace Theater Tuesday.

expectancy, we might have been listening to one of Webern's more rarefied miniatures.

After hearing his program, it would be hard to imagine Moser making an ugly sound. We would expect beautiful playing in the "October" and "January" movements from Tchaikovsky's "The Seasons" — turned out here with a wistfulness and singing tone that brought Schumann to mind — and in Scriabin's Two Pieces for the Left Hand, Op. 9, which many pianists could not have made sound so rich and full as Moser's performance if they had used

both hands.

But with certain pianists, Scriabin's B Minor Fantasy, Op. 28, the "Scarbo" movement from Ravel's "Gaspard de la Nuit" or the finale of Prokofiev's Seventh Sonata can be made to hector. Not here. In each piece, Moser's masterly pedaling, powerful but controlled left hand and scrupulous layering of dynamics ensured a clarity and solidity to the sound that never lost tonal luster, even at triple forte. And, more crucially, every piece spoke from the heart.

— Joe Banno

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