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Young Concert Artists, Inc.

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Nascent Stars Stretch Out In Three Daunting Concertos

Since 1961 the estimable Young Concert Artists organization has been awarding prizes and nurturing the careers of top-notch emerging talents. For the most part this has involved presenting

them in recitals. But for the last dozen years or so, the organization has been ending its concert season in

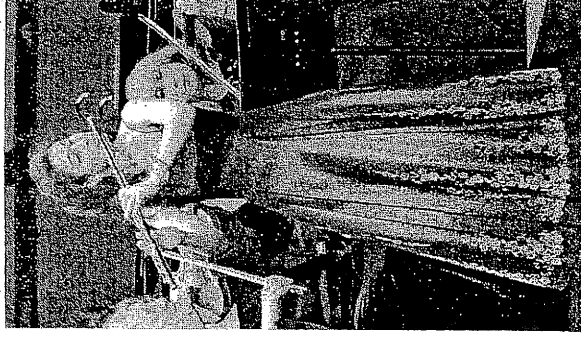
New York with a special program, the Irene Diamond Concert, offering several recent winners of Young Concert Artists auditions performing concertos, to let them really show off what they can do.

As a demonstration of charisma, there is nothing like a concerto, a David-and-Goliath clash between a soloist and an orchestra, and on Wednesday night at the Rose Theater in the Jazz at Lincoln Center complex, three Young Concert Artists winners, two pianists and a flutist, played concertos with the Orchestra of St. Luke's. The concert was conducted by Scott Yoo, who, as a 17-year-old violinist, was a winner in 1989. The event, a gala benefit, was introduced by the tireless Susan Wadsworth, who founded the organization 46 years ago.

The concertos were played without intermission. Coming between a rhapsodic account of Grieg's popular Piano Concerto in A minor, played by Chu-Fang Huang, and a brilliant performance of Prokofiev's daunting Piano Concerto No. 3 in C, played by Gleb Ivanov, the gifted young Hungarian flutist Dora Seres, who played Mozart's beguiling Flute Concerto in G, must have felt sandwiched in. But Ms. Seres is an impressive artist who played with Mozartean style, attractively warm tone, admirable clarity and lyrical grace.

Playing a repertory staple like the Grieg concerto takes some daring, since it is hard to distinguish yourself in the piece. But throughout the performance by the Chinese-born Ms. Huang, you sensed the excitement of a young pianist who could hardly wait to get her turn at it. She played with richly mellow tone, vivid colorings and Romantic flair. In a piece that is often the occasion for expressive liberties, Ms. Huang gave a refreshingly direct, honest and sensitive account.

Though Mr. Yoo is a nimble conductor, there were surprising coordination glitches here and there be-



Erin Baiano for The New York Times

The Hungarian flutist Dora Seres at the Irene Diamond Concert.

The Irene Diamond Concert Rose Theater

tween Ms. Huang and the orchestra. Preparing three concertos with three very different soloists cannot be easy.

The Prokofiev Third is a touchstone work for emerging virtuosos. The music teases you into thinking it's a Neo-Classical romp, with its bustling 16-note scales and passage-work. But it keeps breaking out into pummeling, propulsive, arm-blurring and harmonically astringent intensity, along with episodes of weighty, ruminative somberness.

When Mr. Ivanov, a tall, husky Russian who towered over Mr. Yoo, took the stage, he certainly looked like a pianist who could conquer the Prokofiev Third. And he did, playing with incisive attack, a supple touch in the scurrying passagework, blistering power for the volatile outbursts of chords and plenty of stamina.

As he matures, he may develop the courage to take the piece, especially the first movement, a notch or two more slowly. Still, this is not to quibble. Mr. Ivanov brought this festive program to an exhilarating conclusion.