

Music in Montana

By Susan Hall

ConcertoNet

September 05, 2023

Montana

Fishtail (Olivier Music Barn)

08/18/2023 - & August 19*, 2023

August 18, 2023

Frederic Mompou: *Cants màgics*

Claude Debussy: *Estampes*

Stephen Hough: *Partita*

Franz Liszt: *Années de pèlerinage (Deuxième Année : Italie)*, S. 161: 4. « Sonetto XLVII del Petrarca », 5. « Sonetto CIV del Petrarca » & 6. « Sonetto CXXIII del Petrarca »

Sir Stephen Hough (piano)

August 19, 2023

Valentyn Silvestrov: *Hommage à J.S.B.* for Violin and Piano (quasi echo) – *Three Serenades* for Violin and Piano [*] – *Five Bagatelles* for Solo Piano [*] (* Tippet Rise Commissions and World Premieres)

Sofia Gubaidulina: *Chaconne* for Solo Piano

Alfred Schnittke: *Moz-art à la Haydn* for Two Violins

Johannes Brahms: *Violin Sonata No. 3 in D Minor*, Op. 108

Gidon Kremer, Madara Pētersone (violin), Yulianna Avdeeva (piano)



S. Hough (© Courtesy Tippet Rise Art Center by Kevin Kinzley)

Sir Stephen Hough, an acknowledged keyboard colossus, will open the Wigmore Hall season in London. In one of the world's great concert halls in Montana, he performed a preview to an eager audience.

Frederic Mompou is a composer the pianist has championed. *Cants màgics* is five short subdued movements full of quiet expressiveness which set off the later fireworks splendidly. A meditative and haunting performance was revelatory as Hough's choices often are.

The step by step march of a very quiet concluding "Calma" hints at the "Sunken Cathedral" prelude by Debussy whose *Estampes* followed. The storm of "Jardins sous la pluie" has a riotous impact. Here lovely musical lines combined with decorative weight in rushes where you could barely tell one note from the other as the clusters sang out.

Hough's own composition *Partita* is a five movement drama echoing Mompou's. It gave us a glimpse of Hough's range, technically and also as an artist. He does not milk the loud and flashy pyrotechnics. Abrupt phrases can stop momentarily to let harmonies linger. Hough doesn't wear Chopin's lemon colored gloves or Arthur Rubinstein's top hat, but there is plenty of drama to his presence. It comes from deep musicality. Appeals to emotions and intellect. He lets works grow before our ears.

Liszt's "Petrarch Sonnets" abound in passages of limpid beauty. Hough achieved an intimacy as he showed us elements of fantasy amidst devilish technical displays. The sound in the Olivier Music Barn is clear. The performance spellbinding.

The following concert was a tribute to a great contemporary Ukrainian composer, Valentyn Silvestrov. Tippet Rise Art Center commissioned two new works from Silvestrov, who had to flee from his home in Kiev and now lives in exile in Berlin. Beautiful harmonies and powerful simplicity are earmarks of his work.

The program opened with Silvestrov's *Hommage à J.S.B.* for Violin and Piano (quasi echo). Gidon Kremer, for whom this piece was written, performed. The charming pianist Yulianna Avdeeva, who became well-known during Covid with her Facebook programs on Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, provided echo and then some clear comments. Silvestrov has made much of echoes, sounds that follow sounds already made and heard. Echoes flare up from the past.

Avdeeva often performs composers like Wladyslaw Szpilman, Dmitri Shostakovich, Mieczyslaw Weinberg and Prokofiev, who have been trapped and denied in their countries of birth. She has the technical capacity to convey agitation and even fury. She can also deliver dreamlike moods and lamentations. She followed the first Silvestrov with a flowing interpretation of Sofia Gubaidulina's *Chaconne*.

The first of Silvestrov's brand new pieces was for violin and piano. The *Three Serenades* were memories of memories, and had the elusive and enigmatic quality that one associates with the composer. Avdeeva performed the second world premiere, *Five Bagatelles*, with a delightful lilt. Understated musical shapes are still clear in Avdeeva's hands. There is an elegiac tenderness in the often bursting rhythms. A sense of suspension leaves us feeling things are not normal.

The two Silvestrov premieres were separated by the humorous Schnittke work, in which Madara Pētersone joined Kremer in the fun.

A concluding Brahms *Violin Sonata No. 3* seemed tame after our engorgement in Silvestrov with a touch of Schnittke. It was lovely and blossomed in the special acoustics of Olivier Music Barn.

Sir Stephen Hough is fond of pointing out that we should all relax. Tippet Rise Art Center invites artists and audience to do this. The benefit is the joy of music.

Susan Hall

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