



from
Young Concert Artists, Inc.

Charlie Albright, pianist

Young Hands Tackling Chopin's Intimidating Études

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At 22 the American pianist Charlie Albright already boasts a daunting résumé. An economics and pre-med undergraduate at Harvard and a master's student at the New England Conservatory of Music, he recently won two prestigious prizes: the Young Concert Artists auditions and the Gilmore Young Artist award.

Judging by his excellent New York debut on Tuesday evening at Merkin Concert Hall, presented by the Young Concert Artists series, he's handling his workload just fine.

Mr. Albright sailed through Chopin's Opus 25 Études with a jaw-dropping technique, his hands blurring over the keyboard in No. 10, "Octaves," and making easy work of the thirds in No. 6. Virtuosity meshed with a distinctive musicality throughout, evident in his playful approach to No. 3, "Cartwheel" and the soulful introspection he brought to No. 7, "Cello." He teetered on the edge of danger in the arpeggio whirlwind of No. 12, "Ocean," an exciting conclusion to the program.

Mr. Albright began the concert on an introspective note with Janacek's "Sonata I.X.1905," written as a tribute to a young factory worker killed that year during demonstrations in what is now the Czech Republic. Mr. Albright's intelligently wrought interpretation deftly conveyed both the melancholy and passionate elements of this enigmatic piece.

Young Concert Artists is celebrating its 50th anniversary this season; as part of the festivities the organization has paired alumni with fledging performers in their debut recitals.



Jennifer S. Altman for The New York Times
Charlie Albright, in his New York debut, performing on Tuesday evening at Merkin Concert Hall.

The veteran pianist Anne-Marie McDermott was the guest artist here, joining Mr. Albright for a sparkling rendition of Mozart's Sonata in D for two pianos (K. 448).

He also offered the premiere of "Til It Was Dark" by Chris Rogerson, Young Concert Artists' composer in residence. Mr. Rogerson introduced the work, which he said was inspired by his memories of summers with friends. The virtuosic exuberance and bell-like sonorities of "Break," the first movement, evoked school bells and scampering children. The wistful, chromatic harmonies of "Important Things," the gentle third movement, suggested more solemn youthful moments.

As an encore Mr. Albright offered a warm-blooded performance of Liszt's arrangement of Schumann's "Widmung."

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