



Daniel Lehardt, piano

Daniel Lehardt, Chichester Chamber Concerts

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From the opening chord of Beethoven's 'Tempest' Sonata, it was clear we were in the hands of a magician. When Anton Schindler asked Beethoven for guidance in playing this sonata, the alleged answer was "read Shakespeare's Tempest". Whether you take this riposte seriously or not, the young Hungarian pianist Daniel Lehardt transported us Prospero-like to a magic "isle full of noises, sounds, and sweet airs that give delight". His calm concentration focused our attention on the music: its fierce contrasts of tempestuous outbursts stilled by those magic chords, and the curiously inward-looking recitative holding our thoughts before plunging into the recapitulation. It was all masterfully done. The critic Donald Tovey allows us to think of Miranda during the gorgeous melody a third of the way into the slow movement, and surely hearing and seeing Daniel Lehardt playing she would have delighted in this 'brave new world that hath such creatures in it'. But all this magic was just the curtain-raiser for the next item which for me was the star of the show: Bartók's Piano Sonata. What energy, what wild rhythms! Lehardt played as if possessed – completely winning over any of the audience who might have been timid about Bartók by his sheer love of this wonderful Hungarian music. The final devilish dance whirled faster and faster to the end and our enthusiastic cheers. I could not imagine a better performance. After the interval we had two more very contrasting pieces. The first was Mozart's profound and unsettling A minor Rondo, sometimes almost Chopin, sometimes reflecting Mozart's renewed interest in Bach. Rachmaninov is rich fare and Lehardt played this passionate and complex music with extraordinary technical prowess and a powerfully concentrated conviction. Daniel Lehardt is an extraordinarily talented pianist. Well done Chichester for giving him a platform; watch out for him in the future.