



Andrew Tyson, *pianist*

La Libre.be

The World of Andrew Tyson

The Queen Elisabeth Competition

Martine D. Mergeay

La Libre (Belgium)

June 1, 2013

A phenomenal musician, a refined artist, an accomplished pianist. A joyous Thursday night.

The very choice of Sonata no. 15 K.533 is in itself a sign of courage, and when one plays like Andrew Tyson, it is a stroke of genius! A visionary sonata made as though of nothing but time (one of Mozart's longer sonatas): the young American (26) lays open its lines and structure, both in their larger scheme and in detail.

Following the first movement – Allegro –luminous and simple – the complexities of the writing organically integrated in the discourse – the eerie Andante takes the form of an inner journey, decisive, nostalgic, poignant, bordering on confusion (including that of tonality) and yet re-establishing clarity. The rondo testifies to this with its little melody which wants to be exuberant but whose gaiety is quite fragile. Can one imagine sharing all this in a competition, with an audience who, a priori, expect above all the excitement of big concertos? Tyson succeeds in doing it. This sonata is a gift.

“In the Wake of Ea” throws us straight into the densest mystery which unfolds along two main axes: that of narration and that of color. Here, Andrew himself seems to draw out the colors of the orchestra to better nourish his story. Contrasts, radiance, an ease of all the nuances in intensity from pianississimo to fortississimo, the conjuring of beauty (it is there, too), make this piece the second privileged journey.

Tyson's third entrance on the stage will be as radiant as the previous two. And his opening of Rachmaninoff's 2nd Concerto as personal and as compelling as everything we have heard from him up to that point. The tempo is fast, the character rather light, something that does not preclude depth or power when it is called for but it is a power without any heaviness. The American employs his immense skills and his musical genius to serve us an enchanted vision of the work, fresh and original, devoid of clichés, and, again, more introspective than demonstrative. The opening Moderato gives way to Adagio sostenuto conceived as a single large phrase of growing, almost unsustainable, tension, leading to a short cadenza followed by the blossoming song of appeasement and reconciliation. The final Allegro – whimsical, as the marking “scherzando” implies- will experience some discordances with the orchestra but, after a magnificent suspended passage, will end euphorically.

All in all, the same level of refinement and elegance as Liu Yuntian but in this case fully successful.