



Tomer Gewirtzman, pianist

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A young virtuoso makes his D.C. debut

Charles T. Downey | *The Washington Post* | November 10, 2015

Israeli pianist Tomer Gewirtzman, 25, one of the six winners of the Young Concert Artists auditions in New York on Saturday, made his Washington debut Monday evening, hosted by the Embassy of Israel under the auspices of the Embassy Series. His concert highlighted both formidable virtuosity and stylistic sensitivity.

Pieces by Bach and Haydn seemed to show an awareness of historically informed performance practice and the sounds of both the harpsichord and the forte piano.

Gewirtzman kept his foot off the sustaining pedal for Bach's Toccata in E Minor, BWV 914, which made possible a wide selection of detached and legato articulations. True to the improvisatory nature of the genre, Gewirtzman opened with a brassy, off-the-cuff approach but switched to a more refined differentiation of voicing in the fugal sections.

In Haydn's Sonata in C (Hob. XVI:48), Gewirtzman used the una corda and sustaining pedals to temper the sound of the piano, gilding all of the piece's ornate curlicues and enjoying the stops and starts of the lightning-fast Rondo. Even in the bitingly dissonant parts of Ioseb Bardanashvili's "Postlude," from 1993, Gewirtzman found ways to coax alluring sounds from the embassy's small and not always flattering piano.

The tinny limitations of the piano's high register didn't do Chopin's Barcarolle in F-sharp Major, Op. 60, any favors, in a rendition at times evocative but not compelling. There was no doubt about Gewirtzman's virtuoso credentials, however, after a thrilling performance of Rachmaninoff's First Piano Sonata (D Minor, Op. 28). Inspired by the characters of Goethe's "Faust," its first movement opposes two themes suggestive of the questing nature of Faust and the innocence of Gretchen. Alternately applying brute force, meticulous clarity of finger work and legato line, Gewirtzman made a strong case for this lesser-known work.



*Tomer Gewirtzman performs at the Embassy of Israel.
(Morris Simon/The Simon Firm for the Embassy Series)*