

STANISLAV KHRISTENKO

Critical Acclaim

“Khristenko’s gentle, loving approach to the keyboard — and his palette of touches — yielded a startling array of emotions.”

- *The Washington Post*

“Mr. Khristenko plays with thoughtful lucidity and restraint.”

- *The New York Times*

“Playful lightness and effortless precision.”

-*The Gramophone*

“Dazzling music-making.”

- *The Miami Herald*

"A deeply spiritual performance with great individuality... tour-de-force of technical, musical and stylistic mastery."

- *The Plain Dealer, Cleveland*

“An artist possessed of vast talent and charisma.”

- *The Plain Dealer, Cleveland*

“Khristenko being totally “at home” with the 3rd of Rachmaninov, flaunting a free play, organic and powerful, capable of infinite gentleness, guided by the inner vision and inventiveness.”

-*La Libre*

“In the first concerto of Brahms the Russian pianist shows himself to be the architect of grand style, building ‘maestoso’ with irrepressible authority. The full and deep sound coupled with stunning control of the intensities allows him to sculpt the phrase in the mass of expressions and provide the discourse with a natural continuity.”

-*Le Soir*

“There are many extremely gifted young pianists in the world now, and it is difficult to predict which ones will have a long career of importance. But I will be very surprised if Stanislav Khristenko is not one of them.”

-*Fanfare Magazine*

“Khristenko gave us dynamic variety. He was capable of fine pianissimos and thunderous fortissimos.”

-*Arizona Republic*

STANISLAV KHRISTENKO

Washington post • May 10, 2015

Pianist Khristenko helps Fairfax Symphony finish season joyously

BY GRACE JEAN

The Fairfax Symphony Orchestra has a knack for attracting guest soloists who have won recent competitions — and no wonder, because the pliant ensemble provides rising artists with an ideal setting in which to showcase their talents.

For its season finale Saturday evening at George Mason University's Center for the Arts, the symphony featured Stanislav Khristenko in Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 24 in C Minor, K. 491. In the Ukraine-born pianist's hands, the work became an organic creation, performed with care and charismatic expression, rather than a regurgitation of an ancient relic written in 1786. Khristenko's gentle, loving approach to the keyboard — and his palette of touches — yielded a startling array of emotions. His solos captivated with their clear simplicity, and yet he also was not shy about making listeners work to hear the Steinway ruminating beneath the orchestral material. At times cherubic and at other moments intensely hunched, Khristenko achieved an easy rapport with the orchestra, conducted by Music Director Christopher Zimmerman, striking a delicate balance between the concerto's gravitas and the finale's lighthearted call and refrain.

If the program's first half was about refinement and restraint, then the second half was about unleashing the fury in Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, Op. 64. Khristenko's Mozart left an imprint on the expanded orchestra, inspiring the musicians to explore a broader spectrum of its collective sonic power. Reveling in the brightly sweeping brash sounds and ardent melodies, the orchestra generated an elegant waltz and coasted through a joyous finale, prompting well-deserved audience whoops at the conclusion.

Jean is a freelance writer.



STANISLAV KHRISTENKO

The New York Times • May 20, 2014

For a Pianist, a Chance to Impress Once Again

Stanislav Khristenko Plays a Prize Recital at Zankel Hall

By ZACHARY WOOLFE

The players who do well in the Cleveland International Piano Competition are often perceived as thoughtful, introspective, even introverted — not your average finger-crashing young virtuosos. So it is with the Ukrainian pianist Stanislav Khristenko, the winner of last year's Cleveland contest, who, as part of his first-prize reward, gave an impressive recital on Monday evening at Zankel Hall.



Photo: Ruby Washington, New York Times

Mr. Khristenko, who turns 30 on Sunday, plays with thoughtful lucidity and restraint. While his technique is more than solid, he has barely an ounce of flamboyance about him. Even Liszt's gaudy "Rhapsodie Espagnole" was here an occasion for careful accretions of intensity rather than sheer bombast.

Unsurprisingly, the revelation of the recital was a quiet work, Zemlinsky's four "Fantasies on Poems by Richard Dehmel." These Mr. Khristenko treated with unruffled, unrushed calm: He was suave in "Stimme des Abends," flowing and sensitive in "Käferlied," responsive to both the exhortations and gentle whispers in "Waldseligkeit." The dissonances seemed as natural as the consonances in a poised reading of "Liebe," as well as in a wary rendition of the enigmatic Adagio from Ernst Krenek's Piano Sonata No. 3.

Throughout the evening, Mr. Khristenko was alert to both details and broad strokes. At the start of the second movement of Bartok's madcap Piano Sonata, three successive chords had different textures, each increasingly brittle.

There was nothing cute or sly about the riffs on Spanish music in Mr. Khristenko's take on the Liszt work. Everything was taken at face value, the waves of sound building up organically. The emphasis was rightly on that special nostalgic quality Liszt tried to capture: the nature of memory itself, with musical lines fading and then reconstituting, slightly altered and mashed.

What Mr. Khristenko lacked, in the Liszt and in parts of the Bartok sonata and Prokofiev's Sonata No. 7 ("Stalingrad"), was a final inch of demented grandeur, that extra quality that takes performances of this febrile music from excellent to unforgettable. But his programming was canny, with the Prokofiev sonata following a delicate performance of Chopin's Fantasy in F minor.

The wandering quality in the first movement of the Prokofiev felt like a natural outgrowth of the Chopin. The “Stalingrad” Sonata also has a restlessness that tied it securely to the Bartok sonata that opened the evening.

Mr. Khristenko played two encores, a Montsalvatge divertimento and Prokofiev’s “Suggestion Diabolique,” with the same controlled dignity that he brought to the rest of the recital.

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STANISLAV KHRISTENKO

Gramophone • December, 2014

FANTASIES • Stanislav Khristenko (pn) • STEINWAY & SONS 300032 (74:20)

By JED DISTLER

Stanislav Khristenko's first-place victory in the 2013 Cleveland International Piano Competition generated well-deserved online chatter, much of it directed to his wide-ranging portfolio of live performances posted on YouTube. His recital debut consists of Fantasies ranging from tiny jewel to epic canvas.

Beginning with a familiar epic canvas, Schumann's C major Fantasie, Khristenko organises the first movement's overflowing font of ideas and mercurial mood-swings into a fluid, flexible entity. Varied voice leadings and discreet tempo adjustments keep the central movement's obsessive dotted rhythms alive and active, while few pianists have tossed off the coda's horrifically difficult skips with such playful lightness and effortless precision. If Khristenko's rubato in the lyrical finale arguably lacks the seasoned simplicity of Horowitz, Fiorentino or, among recent younger contenders, Andreas Haefliger, his gorgeous textural contouring conveys the impression that the leisurely arpeggiated left-hand writing and the long right-hand cantabiles emerge from separate instruments, dead-pianist style (and that's a compliment).

Bruckner's obscure three-minute Fantasie in G major consists of a modest chordal accompaniment supporting a single-note melody that quickly strays from the home key. Khristenko's is the best of this unassuming little gem's few commercial recordings. He milks the expressive possibilities of Zemlinsky's early Op 9 Fantasien to more subjective and probing effect than in Silke Avenhaus's relatively straighter Naxos traversal. Khristenko's sparse pedalling and linear cogency in the Brahms Op 116 Pieces convince more than his tendency towards slow tempi and overly stretched-out, self-conscious phrasing, save for the energetic and direct D minor closer. Succinct, informative booklet-notes and balanced, realistic engineering.

STANISLAV KHRISTENKO

Press release • February 2, 2015

New York, NY (February 2, 2015) – Ukraine-born pianist Stanislav Khristenko has officially been added to the roster of Steinway Artists. The designation recognizes a select group of pianists who have chosen to perform exclusively on The Family of Steinway-Designed pianos.

Khristenko has been closely associated with Steinway & Sons since his debut album, *Fantasies*, was released on the Steinway & Sons recording label in 2014. The album was heralded by critics, including Gramophone's Jed Distler, who remarked that the collection represents fantasies "ranging from tiny jewel to epic canvas" and All Music Guide's James Manheim, who wrote that the album "lives up to the high standards that have been set by the Steinway & Sons label. Highly recommended." "I am very excited about becoming a Steinway Artist. I've been playing on Steinway pianos since early childhood, and it is a big honor to be recognized by the company among top pianists from all over the world. It is an event of a lifetime for me," said Khristenko. "Steinway & Sons has a great future in the 21st century, and I am looking forward to joining forces with the company to build a better future for classical music as a member of the Steinway family."

A "poet of piano," and "an architect of grand style" (*Le Soir*), Khristenko has appeared as a soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra of Belgium, the Cleveland

Orchestra, the Phoenix Symphony, the Hong Kong Chamber Orchestra, and the Moscow Conservatory Orchestra. His career includes solo recitals at Carnegie Hall and performances with orchestras in Berlin's Grosser Hall, Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, Severance Hall in Cleveland, Moscow Conservatory Great Hall, and Hong Kong City Hall. He is a graduate of the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory and the Cleveland Institute of Music.

About Steinway & Sons

Since its founding in New York in 1853, Steinway & Sons has been considered the world's premier piano manufacturer. Known for their exceptional craftsmanship, Steinway & Sons pianos are built in one of two company-owned and operated factories: Astoria, New York and Hamburg, Germany. Steinway & Sons pianos are still constructed primarily by hand, using many of the techniques developed over 160 years ago. Today, Steinway & Sons also offers the Boston and Essex piano lines, *Listen*, a magazine for music and culture lovers, and the Steinway & Sons record label. For more information, visit www.steinway.com.

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STANISLAV KHRISTENKO

Le Soir • May 29, 2013

Queen Elisabeth Competition: when the pianists want to tell us a story

Stanislav Khristenko (Russia, 29 years) is a perfectionist who combines degrees from Moscow conservatory and Cleveland Institute. He puts his impressive skills to work when playing Haydn, at once stylish and studded with surprises, bashful and ironic. Together they permit him to create the strongest bond of complicity – to the point where piano and the orchestra entwine, producing stupefying effects of crossed resonances.

In the first concerto of Brahms the Russian pianist shows himself to be the architect of grand style, building ‘maestoso’ with irrepressible authority. The full and deep sound coupled with stunning control of the intensities allows him to sculpt the phrase in the mass of expressions and provide the discourse with a natural continuity.

Adagio becomes a superb meditation on the verge of a prayer. Solid and rhythmic, the final rondo develops without haste in its beautiful fullness and so without ever forgetting its dancing allusions. But this is done in order to better unleash the final climax. This is very powerful and beautiful. Beautiful example of a great Russian school.