

Dear All

Happy New Year to you all. I have two bits of news for you which concern artists who will appear at this year's Festival.

You may be interested in reading the review below from The Guardian last week about Pavel Kolesnikov who will be performing for us in this year's Festival on Saturday 4th July at St Peter's Church, Newton.

Pavel Kolesnikov review - an outstanding pianist in every degree

Sun 5 Jan 2020 Wigmore Hall, London

by Tim Ashley

5 out of 5 stars.

The young Russian's recital was breathtaking in its finesse and emotion - from eerie Bartók to volatile Beethoven Reined in yet intense

Dusk to Dawn was the title of Pavel Kolesnikov's latest Wigmore recital, a superb, wonderfully programmed evening that more than confirmed the London-based Russian pianist's reputation as one of the most accomplished and original of today's younger musicians. Each half closed with a Beethoven sonata: the first with the Moonlight, Op 27, No 2, the second with the Waldstein, Op 53. Works by Chopin, including the Fantaisie-Impromptu in C sharp minor, Op 66, and the Raindrop Prelude in D flat, prefaced the former. The Waldstein, meanwhile, followed the first of Schumann's Opus 23 Nachtstücke, Debussy's Feux d'Artifice and Bartók's eerie The Night's Music from Out of Doors - all performed as an unbroken sequence, its gathering tensions eventually released in the sonata's final transition from darkness to light.

Kolesnikov's playing combines great emotional intelligence with understated virtuosity: every shift in sonority and mood speaks volumes in interpretations that are consistently striking. His Beethoven was reined in yet intense. The opening movement of the Moonlight, introverted, lamenting and austere, was balanced by an account of the finale that seemed all the more turbulent for its very restraint, while the Waldstein, launched with terrific élan, was breathtaking both in its technical finesse and emotional volatility.

Weight and elegance, meanwhile, were combined in some wonderfully fluid Chopin, particularly the C sharp minor Scherzo, Op 39. The exquisite, filigree textures of the central trio offset the force of the opening statement. Schumann's sombre, funereal Nachtstück was all fierce implacability, and both Feux d'Artifice and Bartók's The Night Music were marvellous in their colour, dexterity and subtle dynamic gradations. A truly outstanding recital, every second of it.

Also, if you enjoy watching 'Silent Witness', then next week's editions on Monday and Wednesday (BBC1 at 9pm) star Bob Pugh, who opens the Gower Festival this year on Monday 29th June in an evening of Poetry and Jazz at The King Arthur in Reynoldston. Melanie Walters (who plays Stacey's mother, Gwen, in 'Gavin and Stacey', which was this Christmas' biggest hit on television) will join him, as will the Welsh Jazz pianist, Geoff Eales who gave an outstanding concert in the 2018 Gower Festival. The Radio Times says about Bob's performance: 'stealing the show is Bob Pugh as the suspect's father, a smouldering ball of suppressed anger'. Bob, who lives in Mumbles, also appears as Craster in 'Game of Thrones'.

Best wishes

Anne (Pope)

Gower Festival Friends Membership Secretary