



Events and Concert Performances

Tomáš Vášek -Uncovering Beauty

It must be said that it is more than likely without any exaggeration that those who came to Tomáš Vášek's piano recital in the Prague Conservatory Hall on 23rd November 2017 did so mainly out of curiosity. The programme of the middle concert in the 5th Rudolf Firkušný Piano Festival offered unpublished works by the famous pianist that had never been performed in Prague. Firkušný composed *Three Humoresques*, *Serenade* and *Album Leaf* between the 8th and 10th year of his life. Considering that, one can only admire his genius. Those pieces are not in the slightest childish, neither are they for children to perform. Tomáš Vášek had previously recorded those works for radio and chose an approach with smile and enthusiasm. One can only imagine the composer himself to have felt the same way.



Another unusual and bold step was the inclusion of the *Suite in A Major op.98* by Antonín Dvořák. Firkušný loved Dvořák, and Vášek, who always aims to be most faithful to the manuscript and to the composer's intention presented this work in a different light from the usual. The *Suite in A Major* is often described as a fine example of an intimate lyrical cycle; however, Vášek tries to show to the maximum its impressive brilliance (particularly in the 1st, 2nd and 5th movement) despite the occasionally slightly unidiomatic composer's stylisation. At the same time a single opportunity to immerse into the deepest lyricism was not missed and the audience went fully with it.

Tomáš Vášek took a similar approach to the *Two Rhapsodies op 79* by Dvořák's friend Johannes Brahms. Here is no sign of a contented old man, but on the contrary, of one youthfully in love with Clara Schumann. This is Brahms' credo fulfilled both in highly passionate sections and inner lyrical ones as he never wanted to say good bye to these feelings.

Andante Spianato e Grande Polonaise Brillante E-flat Major op.22 by Fryderyk Chopin have belonged for years as a tour de force to Tomáš Vášek's vast repertoire, and so thus the audience was again rewarded.

In the final work of the concert Liszt's cycle *Venezia e Napoli* he brought out any minute details both in the dynamic delicateness in the opening *Gondoliera*, in the central part of the final *Tarantella* and in the expressive darkness of the central *Canzona*. He launched fully charged into the devilish tempo with expressivity. The excited audience was additionally treated to an encore, the very last *eclogue* by Václav Jan Tomášek. It was a great evening from the beginning to the end!

Iva Fleischhansová