

Pianist delivers challenging classics with drama

YOUNG ARTISTS SERIES PERFORMER AT KRAVIS SHOWS
FLAWLESS TECHNIQUE DURING PRESENTATION OF FINAL
PIANO SONATA BY BEETHOVEN, PIECE BY DUTILLEUX.

By MÁRCIO BEZERRA , Special To The Daily News

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The Kravis Center's Rinker Playhouse had the distinction to present the Florida debut of pianist Evgenia Rubinova Tuesday as a part of its Young Artists Series.

As anyone of the enthralled audience could attest, the qualification "young" is misleading when characterizing a fully bloomed artist such as Rubinova. Her recital was beyond adjectives from beginning to end.

The program started with the *Sonata No. 32 in C minor, Opus 111* by Ludwig van Beethoven. The last piano sonata of the German master, it is rarely played in our region, partly because of its technical difficulties. It is, nevertheless, accessible to most audiences and an unforgettable piece when properly played.

Rubinova's approach favored theatrical gestures; her Beethoven was full of contrasts of dynamics and moods. While one could take issue with her extended fermatas and rubati, her rhythmic liberties were consistent with her dramatic approach. Her flawless technique made one forget about the daunting difficulties of the second movement, and the double trills she performed with ease sounded like they should: a representation of spiritual transcendence.

As a sign of respect for the audience, Rubinova repeated the exposition of the first movement, something rarely heard in performances these days.

This respect for the audience also was shown in Henri Dutilleux's *Chorale and Variations*. While most mainstream classical pianists shun from the music of live composers, the fact is that audiences welcome

some change from the traditional repertory, as long as the new music is good and well played. In spite of his low profile, Dutilleux is certainly one of today's top composers. His output is rather small, and he avoids the publicity most of his colleagues live on. His music shows that for him quality comes above everything else. Although he uses lots of dissonances, his masterful manipulation of form, combined with the pathos present in many of his works, make his music understandable even for the non-initiated.

Chorale and Variations is the final number of his first *Piano Sonata* and performed independently more often than as a movement. Like the last movement of Beethoven's Opus 111, it is a work where technical difficulties symbolize spiritual transcendence. Rubinova's outstanding reading made an excellent case for the music of the French master. The audience responded appropriately, cheering the performer and her selection. How often do we hear bravos for works written after World War I?

The second part was dedicated to Sergei Rachmaninoff's *Moment Musicaux, Opus 16*. Although the works are not, by any means, superficial, the set was a welcome departure from the emotionally draining first half of the program. As with everything she touched that evening, Rubinova turned the six numbers into gold. Her approach was, once more, highly theatrical and personal. Her rendition of the third piece, for instance, substituted the bitter sweetness one hears so often with a desolate, almost harsh interpretation.

Unusually, the famous Kravis walking standing ovation did not happen: Everybody remained seated, waiting for more. Rubinova obliged, ending a perfect evening of music making with two encores: the *Prélude Opus 23 No. 7* by Rachmaninoff and *Liebesleid* by Fritz Kreisler as transcribed for piano by Rachmaninoff.