

Creative Living

celebrating all good things

Victory goes to the heart in Hochman's enchanted evening at Stissing Center in Pine Plains

by Jim Donick

The second of the four concerts of the Stissing Center's 2021 Chamber Music Series played to an all but sellout crowd on Friday evening Aug. 13.

Pianist Benjamin Hochman enchanted the early-evening concert-goers with just over an hour's demonstration of keyboard mastery that, at first blush, one would hardly expect to witness in Pine Plains, New York.

His program consisted of four parts, each of which engaged the listener intellectually and, as the program progressed, engaged them emotionally.

Hochman's first selection, Beethoven's Sonata No. 27 in E minor Opus 90, may have been chosen help define the evening. Beethoven had named its first movement, "a contest between head and heart," which turned out to be the story of this particular evening.

His second piece, Hannah Kendall's "Processional," was more intellectual than romantic. It was recently written to evoke the processional that was actually Dr. Martin Luther King's march at Selma, Alabama, leading on to the civil rights movement that absorbed a country.

From that point in the concert, the

contest between head and heart was clearly going to the heart. On an early Friday evening in August that was exceptionally fitting.

Hochman offered three preludes from Debussy that were all but intoxicating in their romance and finished the announced part of the program with "Fantasies" from Brahms. The Brahms "Fantasies" could not have been more aptly named as Hochman's mastery of the keyboard delivered them in an emotional and sometimes dreamy style that left little doubt but that this evening's contest between head and heart was ultimately destined to be awarded to the heart.

After an enthusiastic and extended standing ovation, Hochman returned to the piano for an encore of Liszt's "Dream of Love" and cemented the heart's victory over the head - at least for this particular evening.

The center's director of Chamber Music, Sophia Zhou, promises that the remainder of the 2021 Chamber Music Series will continue to bring world class music to the community and will promote young artists.

Upcoming performances

The Stissing Center's next performance is Sunday, Aug. 22 at 4 p.m., and will see the debut of the latest musical addition to The Stissing Center, a newly installed Allen Renaissance Quantum "Unit Orchestra" Theatre Organ. The program will music ranging from "Bach to Queen and Everything Between."

The next chamber music performance is scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 19, at 4



Pianist Benjamin Hochman performed at The Stissing Center in Pine Plains on Aug. 13. *Courtesy photo*



Performing music ranging from "Bach to Queen and Everything Between," the next concert at the Stissing Center will highlight the recently purchased and newly installed Renaissance Quantum "Unit Orchestra" Theatre Organ. The event is set for Sunday, Aug. 22 at 4 p.m. *Courtesy photo*

p.m. Noted as "Young Artists Carnegie Ensemble Connect," it promises an eclectic program that will range from ancient Chinese Dances to modern Klezmer music.

The final performance will take place on Oct. 3 and will feature Pianist Shai Wosner, who will be playing selections from Beethoven and Anton Diabelli. Other offerings will include jazz, blues, and nearly everything else.

Tickets and information are available on their website, thestissingcenter.org.


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