

MUSIC ON SUNDAYS

Christ Church, Chichester, 27 February 2011

YURI PATERSON-OLENICH (piano)

Schubert	Moments Musicaux, nos. 1-3
Granados	Three Spanish Dances (from Op.37)
S. Cant	Scattering Landscapes
Medtner	Forgotten Melodies, Op.38

There must be hundreds of classical music lovers of so-called working age in this area, but I only counted a tiny handful at this recital. If they knew that, for less than a tenner, they could have heard a true virtuoso playing superb music, Christ Church would have been full to overflowing on Sunday afternoon. Despite the tiring experience of a long hold-up in a broken down train, Yuri Paterson-Olenich displayed the form that, against world-class opposition, has won him awards from the BBC and the prestigious Gramophone magazine.

The best music began the recital, but the standard of Yuri's playing ensured that Schubert's shadow did not fall over the rest of the programme. He showed a natural feel for the idiom of Granados' music, employing extremes of tempo in romantically free and impulsive renderings of Andaluza and the *galante* piece - most convincing. But the highlight of the afternoon was the aptly named suite of Forgotten Melodies by Medtner, a Russian pianist-composer who has been almost totally eclipsed by his contemporary, Rachmaninov. On this evidence his music is long overdue for resurrection to the concert-platform. The suite began with a complex, passionate sonata that scarcely pauses to draw breath, and continued with a series of pieces which sound, at times, fiendishly difficult while encompassing a wide variety of mood. The music often sounds like that of a less lugubrious Rachmaninov, but with every bit as many notes! On this evidence, Medtner was less melodically gifted, but these Forgotten Melodies kept me listening for the full forty minutes and proved very palatable. They were very well received by the audience, whose applause was clearly as much for Yuri's superbly virtuosic and characterful performance as for Medtner's music.

The pianist's late arrival was gamely covered by composer Stephanie Cant, who spoke about the genesis and development of her Scattering Landscapes. These miniatures proved unusually accessible for new piano music, and Yuri played them with great skill.

What a privilege to hear such a fine artist for such a modest outlay!

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