

## **Anton Kuerti**

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### PIANIST KUERTI IS AVERSE TO SHOWING OFF

Last year Anton Kuerti replaced Murray Perahia, who had to cancel his concert in the series Master pianists because of an injury. Marco Riaskoff promptly became Kuerti's Dutch impresario, which is why he once again played in Amsterdam's Concertgebouw last Sunday, for a practically sold out Great Hall.

The Canadian gave a recital that would have made the sensitive listener grateful. The 70-year old Kuerti is not demonstrative; he is averse to showing off for effect. The musician digs and searches for the smallest details within harmony and melody. At the beginning of the concert the audience may have worried that this might just become a very long night. But gradually one realized that Kuerti had composed his programme with extraordinary care and within that structure he played progressively to the peaks of his ability.

While the rendition of Mozart's Fantasia in c (KV 475) and Haydn's Sonate in Es (Hob. XVI:52) begged for some spice and a broader dynamic reach, his Mendelssohn Variations Serieuses and the Rondo Capriccioso were extremely energetic. The familiar melody of this latter work received fresh colours. The final chords were even played with such conviction, that the usher on duty immediately came down the stairs with a bouquet of flowers, while a composition of Beethoven was still to come.

In the Sonate No. 31, Beethoven's last but one, the pianist seemed to explore the parts one by one with his silken touch, without wanting to convey one exclusive truth. Caution was the key word. That delivered magical phrases, but also created a desire for more powerful play.

That the fall weather affected the breathing passages of the public is even more evident in a solo recital than during a symphonic concert. Yet Kuerti never permitted this to break his concentration. His fingers sprinted across the keys in Schumann's Second Sonata and gave the notes their weight in an elegant fashion.

-- Frederike Berntsen