

## Pianist Anton Kuerti at the Concertgebouw

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### PIANIST ANTON KUERTI CRAWLS IN AND BEHIND THE NOTES

Anton Kuerti, piano, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Great Hall. Heard 1 November

For several decades Anton Kuerti has belonged to the important concert pianists of his generation. In the Netherlands however this (Canada-residing) Austrian remained virtually unknown, until in 2008 he substituted for Murray Perahia in the Amsterdam Series Master pianists. The integrity of his piano performance made such an enormous impression, that Kuerti received his own spot in the current season's series. He could look forward to a completely sold out Great Hall on Sunday evening.

Kuerti allowed himself to be heard in the styles in which his greatest powers lie: the German/Austrian classical and romantic repertoire. On Sunday he once again impressed greatly with his totally non-artificial, natural and at the same time deeply thought through interpretations, even if there were a few more technical flaws than we are used to from top pianists. Phenomenal, how he managed to realize one great aura of tension throughout the long programme.

Soberness and simplicity were Kuerti's prime principles in Mozart's Fantasia in c., KV 475. The whimsicality and the fact, that it's not a slow sonata but a Fantasia, remained too under-emphasised in Kuerti's execution. In Haydn's Sonata in Es, Ho. XVI:52 his interpretation became fuller in contrast. His light touches were gorgeous in the jesting passages. Elsewhere in the programme it also became apparent how well Kuerti is capable of playing very fast and light, while within this he gives every note its own meaning. The Sonata in E flat Major is Haydn's swan song among his sonatas and at the same time his most monumental and visionary work, in which the composer even surpasses his pupil Ludwig van Beethoven's "Sturm und Drang". That splendour was slightly lacking in Kuerti's rather fast and less dramatic execution of the opening part, according to my taste.



Artist Management

In Schumann's Sonata nr. 2 in g Kuerti seemed to loosen up a bit. The opening measures sounded a little bare, but gradually his playing gained ever more depth and beauty of sound. Kuerti proved to have a strong affinity for the idiom of Felix Mendelssohn in his imposing "Variations serieuses", "Scherzo a capriccio" and "Rondo capriccioso". After the fabulous lightness of the jesting Mendelssohn, Kuerti finally in the Beethoven Sonata in A returned to the seriousness that had marked his Mozart rendition at the beginning of the night. The pianist seemed to crawl completely in and behind the notes, thereby exposing the deepest layers in this music, sometimes with remarkable gestures, that led to very plastic melody forming.

Christo Lelie