

Yael Weiss, Piano

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Pianist Yael Weiss lifts Schubert's lyrical effusions

By Peter Jacobi
Herald Times

An hour of Schubert performed by a pianist both technically adept and emotionally clued in: That's what an Auer Hall audience was privileged to hear Thursday evening, courtesy of Yael Weiss.

The Jacobs School faculty artist chose two of Schubert's sonatas, these linked by a theme first employed in the A Minor, D.537, then nine years later in the A Major, D.959, one of the composer's last and greatest in the genre.

That gorgeous and familiar theme (used with a credit for Schubert on the long-running TV situation comedy series "Wings") shows up initially in the A Minor Sonata's middle movement, the Allegretto quasi Andantino, with its melody not yet fully established and its rhythm quirkily offbeat. It returns for grander and more radiant development in the concluding Rondo: Allegretto of the A Major Sonata. Weiss' decision to focus on both sonatas gave the listener a rare opportunity to discern how a composer employs and later re-employs a musical invention, keeps it fresh and makes it grow.

There was, of course, far more to discern, to discover, to hear during Weiss' Schubert evening: first, that no keyboard hurdle seemed too high for her to conquer with aplomb; second, that she has an obvious affinity for the music; and third, that she not

only gave lift to Schubert's lyrical effusions but found what not all pianists do: a sense of the impromptu within them.

One heard also, in the pairing of these two sonatas, how the composer matured. The earlier A Minor offers its fair share of Schubertian goodies. The A Major, however, written in the final months of his tragically short life, contains some of the true glories of the sonata literature, and not only in the aforementioned and beautiful last movement. Each section has its treasures, most certainly the second movement, the Andantino, with a theme introduced in mysterious, even mesmerizing fashion, a theme which then gets transformed into passages of great tension and a hurricane-force climax.

Weiss celebrated and ennobled the Andantino, along with what preceded and followed it in her homage to Schubert. **Hers was an impressive recital. During it, she revealed both the intimacy and the grandeur in Schubert's piano works. That alone is no small achievement. To it, she added a laudably high level of pianism. For this listener, her hour at Auer passed quickly and pleasurably.**

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