

Music review / Mary DePascale

Gampel dazzles Concert audience

PALM SPRINGS - The Sunday Afternoon Concert Series has a real knack for selecting winners.

Pianist Alan Gampel was their opening presentation of this season and he was definitely a dazzler.

His Scarlatti Sonatinas whispered in tones so beautifully delicate they were almost not there, and in contrast, the Liszt-Paganini Etudes sparkles like a thousand fireflies.

In between, the lamenting theme of Beethoven's Sonata apus 81a was touching in its simplicity as Gampel displayed impeccable musicianship. For his mere 24 years he showed remarkable knowledge of composer in a scholarly presentation.

The three Gershwin Preludes had

drive and solid percussive attack as the pianist seductively wailed the Porgy and Bess-like theme of the middle prelude.

The Chopin g minor Ballade although well-handled pianistically neglected to always speak to the essence of Romanticism. Gampel chose to unveil his melodies in a rather thin tone and then become suddenly forte in climax.

Only positives can be said for the Liszt however. Dazzling, daring, pristine technique made the spine tingle as the pianist gracefully dashed off a sublime rendition of Paganini's Church Bell Etude.

Mary DePascale is a free-lance writer.

Mozart concerto performed eloquently and with elan

By James D. Cox
Staff writer

A Alan Gampel, winner of this year's Long Beach Mozart Festival auditions, showed Friday that the prize was justly awarded, when he combined with the festival orchestra in a spirited performance of Mozart's 24th piano concerto.

The 21-year-old has a straightforward approach to his task — he's not a basher. He has an impressive fluid motion at the keyboard that demonstrates confidence as well as skill.

concert review

14th Long Beach Mozart Festival . Friday, 8 p.m.

Gampel and conductor Robert Dill work well with one another. The pianist displays a good sense of his place as one part of the larger musical whole, and Dill does his job in keeping all the component parts together.

The fact that Gampel's playing is smooth doesn't mean that he can't play with power, as he rips through the speedy solo passages in the concerto's first movement.

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