

The Italian Academy at Columbia University (Amsterdam Ave. at 117th Street) hosted a world-renowned pianist, Emanuele Arciuli of Bari, Italy, at its free concert series on Wednesday, February 12, 2014 at 7pm.

Arciuli performed three known pieces on the first half: Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809), **Andante with Variations** in f minor, Hob. XVII:6, Franz Liszt (1811-1886), **Hymne a la nuit**, and Bela Bartok (1881-1945), **Out of Doors**, in five sections, with titles **With Drums and Pipes**, **Barcarolla**, **Musettes**, **The Night's Music**, and **The Chase**, which seemed programmatic in its variety. His technical prowess is amazing. He seems in a league with Andras Schiff, the world's greatest living pianist, with his technical range, from delicate to thundering.

During the second half, we heard three pieces, two of which were New York premieres devoted to Native American themes. Kyle Gann, (b. 1955), professor of music at Bard and former chief critic of the Village Voice, **Earth-Preserving Chant** (2010), and Martin Bresnick, (b. 1946), professor of music at Yale and the Ives recipient, **Ishi's Song** (2012), got premieres, and John Adams (b. 1947), **Phrygian Gates** (1977), got a rehearing. I wrote that the Gann piece has a chant-like layering of sound with lyrical songfulness in juxtaposition with dance-like chords – a reflective tribute to Native American traditions. The Bresnick piece has crisp, lyrical chant – as the basic motif is repeated, various elements are varied. This piece is very refreshing – like sherbet on a hot afternoon, and just as tasty and sweet. Adam's well-known piece is a minimalist classic – repeated elements with slight variations layer over each other, and produce a kaleidoscopic effect. There is a spiritual quality to this piece and a sense of radiant energy, which builds in intensity and becomes like a solid wall of sound. Arciuli is a masterful performer – his phrasing, dynamics and interpretative sensibility are superb. The warm, wood-rich acoustics of the hall provide a lovely venue.

Visit Emanuele Arciuli at <http://www.emanuelearciuli.com/EmanueleArciuli.html>.