

# **CONCERT REVIEW**

## **A new generation of master pianists**

A cornucopia of gifted young pianists shared center stage at the Miami International Piano Festival Master Series on Saturday and Sunday at the Amaturio Theater in the Broward Center. Challenging contemporary repertoire and rarely heard keyboard transcriptions provided a glittering showcase for often-insightful performances by a new generation of pianistic titans.

**Saturday night, Italy's Emanuele Arciuli opened with an exquisite traversal of Haydn's *Andante and Variations*. Arciuli's crystalline tone and patrician musicianship illuminated six of Grieg's *Lyric Pieces*. His invigorating version of *Wedding Day at Troldhaugen* transformed a keyboard vignette into a minor masterpiece. Alternately dreamy and stormy, Arciuli's visionary performance of Beethoven's Sonata No. 31 offered bold contrasts of tempo and dynamics. *Five New Fantasies* by Boston-based composer Yehudi Wyner drew inspiration from the world of jazz and cabaret as well as the atonal salon of Schoenberg. The concluding *Phrygian Gates* by John Adams was near-hypnotic trance music played with almost Herculean virtuosity by Arciuli.**

Croatian-born Misha Dacic began his Sunday matinee recital with a crisp, lithe version of Bach's *Capriccio on the Departure of His Beloved Brother*. He brought a lovely cantabile line to the *Largo Appassionato* of Beethoven's Sonata No. 2. A beautiful sense of light and color pervaded his version of the Volodos transcription of the *Andante* from Rachmaninoff's Cello Sonata. For sheer keyboard fireworks, Dacic's dynamic performance of the Liszt-Busoni *Fantasia and Fugue on a Theme by Meyerbeer* was awesome.

The Scottish virtuoso Steven Osborne concluded the festival Sunday evening with a remarkable display of pianistic bravura. He opened with a bracing account of the Rhapsody No. 1 by Brahms. The misty harmonies of Liszt's *Pater Noster* from *Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses* brought a multitude of tonal hues from Osborne's poetic artistry. The powerful *Funerailles* was a tour-de-force of commanding keyboard pyrotechnics. In five pieces from Olivier Messiaen's *Vingt Regards sur L'enfant*, Steven Osborne displayed a kaleidoscopic palette of tonal colors. The eloquent stasis that Osborne subtly achieved in the opening *Watch of the Father* seemed to make time stop. The rhythmic urgency and incredible technical perfection of the concluding *Watch of the Spirit of Joy* was a rousing celebration of Messiaen's vision of an otherworldly realm.

**by LAWRENCE BUDMEN**