

5th Annual Pianofest with Pianists Levkovich and Radzevičiutė

Submitted by Julia Jacklein

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On Sunday, pianists Dmitri Levkovich and Agnė Radzevičiutė played to a delighted audience at Barrie’s fifth annual Pianofest. These talented artists, both international prizewinners, showed their skill at the instrument in repertoire ranging from Chopin to Gershwin.

Radzevičiutė began the concert with Chopin’s *Barcarolle F Sharp Major Op. 60*, bringing Chopin’s wistful melodies to life with great sensitivity and expression. The shimmering, transparent harmonies of Ravel’s *Ondine* held the audience spellbound; and the first movement of Shumann’s *fantasy Opus 17*, marked “fantastic and passionate,” was wonderfully realized. Throughout her performance, Radzevičiutė demonstrated a deep level of connectedness to the music.

Next, Radzevičiutė was joined by Levkovich in two duets for one piano four hands. Schubert’s *Allegro in A Minor D947*, dubbed “Lebensstürme” (translated as “Storms of Life” – a fanciful title not the composer’s –) was thrilling to listen to and showed off the performers’ virtuosity to full extent. Mendelssohn’s *Andante et Allegro Brilliant, Op. 92*, was particularly interesting to watch. The piece involves a short introductory theme played first by one pianist; then the theme is reiterated by the other pianist, with some overlap of hands as the performers exchange roles; this dialogue continues for some time. From the audience on Sunday, it looked very much as if the pianists were conversing and communicating through the keys, understanding each other without the least difficulty.

After the intermission, it was Levkovich's turn to perform solo in Prokofiev's arresting *Sonata No. 6 in A Major*, one of the composer's "war sonatas." From the opening Morse code-like motif, this sonata communicates a sense of detachment, which at times is tinged with humour and at others verges on hopeless. Throughout, Levkovich was in his element, brilliantly conveying these opposing qualities in the music.

After this rather intense music, the audience welcomed some lighter selections from Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*, arranged for four hands.

Levkovich ended the program with an original arrangement of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, played with much energetic enjoyment.

At the end of the concert, the audience was on its feet. Radzevičiutė gave a touching encore, and as the audience went out, there was animated discussion of the music on all sides. This concert will surely be long remembered by all that were lucky enough to attend.