

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN

PIANO

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Unexpected Conductor and Soloist; Expected Results

The pianist Marc-André Hamelin joined Neville Marriner and company on Tuesday evening.

By STEVE SMITH
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The concert that the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields presented at Avery Fisher Hall on Tuesday night was not the one it originally planned. [Murray](#)

[Perahia](#), the ensemble's principal guest

conductor, withdrew from its American tour because of illness. Neville Marriner, who founded the Academy in 1958, took up the reins for the tour, and in New York the pianist Marc-André Hamelin was added to the bill. The program stuck to presumably safe territory: a piano concerto and a symphony apiece from Haydn and [Mozart](#).



Mr. Hamelin, best known for his dazzling acumen in finger-busting virtuoso fare, proved his mettle in Haydn's music with a sensational recording of the sonatas last year. Here he deftly underscored Haydn's bountiful wit in the outer movements of the popular Concerto in D (Hob. XVIII:11). Even more striking was the ethereal beauty Mr. Hamelin brought to the central Adagio, which stood out even by his own high standards.

If Haydn's concerto was meant to be an effective showpiece, Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 9, "Jeunehomme," was something more: a quietly revolutionary score in which the young composer seized upon the dramatic potential implicit in the opposition of soloist and orchestra. Mr. Hamelin projected authority in his brash incursions during the first movement and provided a suave rendition of a cadenza by Busoni in the tender Andantino.

Mr. Marriner and his players provided stylish support in both concertos, and they sounded lithe and elegant in Mozart's Symphony No. 31 (K. 297), "Paris," a spirited curtain raiser. The ensemble truly came into its own with the final work on the program, Haydn's Symphony No. 104, "London," one of the dozen miraculous works written during his final symphonic efflorescence in the 1790s.

Mr. Marriner provided a suitably portentous introduction and brought an acute sense of dynamic contrast into play in the opening Allegro. Equally appealing were the jovial Menuetto and rustic finale. Confronted with boisterous applause, Mr. Marriner, who turns 84 on Tuesday, briefly mimicked fatigue, massaging his biceps. But he sprang to the podium and offered two encores, a radiant account of the second movement of Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 5 and a buoyant dash through Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro" overture.

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