

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN

PIANO

Hamelin at Aspen

A Review

Harvey Steiman

Special to The Aspen Times

Aspen CO, Colorado

Wednesday, August 20, 2008

“Marc-André Hamelin concluded his piano recital Saturday night at Harris Hall with a dazzling finger-busting arrangement by Godowsky on the Johann Strauss waltz “Wine, Women and Song,” which most would consider a nice encore. What do you do after that? The Canadian pianist asked the audience to “forgive the sacrilege” and played “the Diabelli variation Beethoven never wrote,” a cute play on “Chopsticks.”

That sort of humor infused his quirky program, which included two of his own etudes, one a gloss on a Tchaikovsky lullaby for left hand only, and Alex Weissenberg’s 1982 work, “Sonata in a State of a Jazz.” The latter seemed inspired by Bill Evans’ “Conversations with Myself” recordings. Although Hamelin’s playing lacked the surge and flow of real jazz and did not clarify the layers of the music, it was a fascinating and complex 20 minutes of jazz-classical fusion.

Much better were sprightly performances of two Haydn sonatas and a short Chopin set of the Barcarolle in F-sharp and the Ballade No. 3, delivered with gravitas.”

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