

Pianist Hamelin's repertoire exceeds his reputation

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By OLIN CHISM / The Dallas Morning News

Those who know the pianist Marc-André Hamelin chiefly through his recordings may get a tilted view of the man as the master of often mind-bogglingly difficult pieces by the likes of Alkan, Godowsky, Busoni and Reger. For a sample of this Hamelin, to go to <http://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/details/67218.asp> and click on the audio excerpt.

But Mr. Hamelin's repertoire has always been much broader than that, and two programs at the Texas Conservatory for Young Artists this weekend will explore musical territory at a considerable remove from Alkan. On Friday he'll play the last three piano sonatas of Beethoven, and the next evening he'll do the complete *Iberia* of Albéniz.

Although Mr. Hamelin has an extensive discography, he says that recordings play no role in forming his own interpretations. "For me the only point of reference is the score itself. As much respect as I have for my colleagues, I have never regarded celebrated recordings as a reference."

His source for *Iberia* is a 1998 "urtext," an edition, without editorial additions or emendations, that tries to get as close to the composer's original as possible. The ultimate source, the manuscript, is scattered among four libraries in Spain and the United States, he says.

"It's absolutely fascinating to study," he says. "It makes you realize how much information is lacking or erroneous in the editions we've been following – missing accidentals, wrong accidentals, missing notes, dynamics, slurs – all kinds of things."

In addition to this "new" *Iberia*, Mr. Hamelin will play "Navarra," an unfinished movement by Albéniz that was completed by composer William Bolcom.

The last three sonatas of Beethoven are not often performed as a group around here, though they occasionally show up individually at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. They include some of Beethoven's greatest piano music.

But don't expect Mr. Hamelin to play the complete 32 sonatas some day. The reason is simple: "I don't like them all," he says with finality.

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Marc-André Hamelin performs in a Texas Conservatory of Young Artists recital Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. in John Anthony Theatre of Collin County Community College, 2800 E. Spring Creek Parkway in Plano. Tickets \$15, \$10 for students and seniors. Call 972-985-0392 or go to www.tcy.org.

Online at: <http://www.dallasnews.com/s/dws/fea/entertainment/stories/062104dnlivhamelin.58524.html>