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Arts/Entertainment

Mares was 'thoroughly amazing'

The presentation of the White Rock Concert Series featuring 20-year-old pianist Michelle Mares last Friday evening at the First United Church was surprising and thoroughly amazing.

Surprising because this young Canadian pianist presented a daring undertaking of Beethoven's Sonata op.53, Franz Liszt's Annees de Pelerinage and Etude d'Execution Transcendente No.5, Haydn's Variations and a Piano Sonata No.2 by the American composer Dorothy Cadzow — a close friend of Michelle Mares.

The Beethoven and the Liszt works alone are subjects that demand power, dexterity, manual agility and tonal coloring.

The recital was amazing as Mares proved to have all the required components to render an exciting performance with a secure understanding of the architectural finesse of the compositions, which she decorated with the finest nuances of shading and phrasing.

The basis of all this keyboard perfection is her Mares's technique with which she punctually delivered the music.

Heard during the Haydn's Variations was a lightness of touch, played in a mezzo-piano progression with all the nuances one would like to hear in the reproduction of music of this classical composer.

In the Beethoven Sonata No.2 Mares showed great strength and determination in the Allegro-con-Brio contrasted by an Adagio-Molto in the second movement. The peaceful expression of tranquility gave this movement its characteristics of tenderness and poetry.

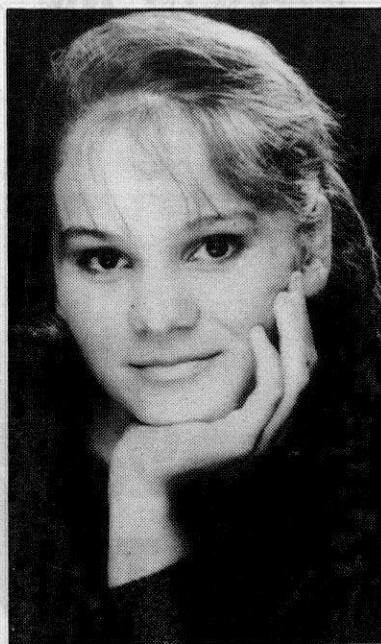
The Sonata concluded with the sparkling idiom of dance and festivity one is also able to find in Beethoven's larger musical canvasses.

The Frans Liszt pieces were treated with the same skill and

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Musical Notes



MICHELLE MARES

artistry but also included some of the showmanship one expects.

In this case it was tastefully rendered and showed the pianist's interpretative control and authority.

Her playing also showed off her gift for dynamic virtuosity in a quality I have not heard in a long time.

Although I consider Annees de Pelerinage not one of the top compositions of Liszt, his writing does not show any mercy for anyone who wants to try it.

However, Mares's rendition was more than daring; it was a recreation which kept the listener spellbound by his mastery of Liszt's flamboyant musical expose.

In this recital, the Annees became a full, complete revelation of Mares' pianistic potential, which no doubt has foundations in the music of the Romantic period and also in the contemporary scores.

Liszt's Etude was proof of that. Here the pianist took on some of the most impossible scores this composer wrote and clearly this was profoundly enjoyed.

I have special appreciation for composer Dorothy Cadzow's Piano Sonata No.2, which is a delightful piece with eloquent references to the French musical idiom of the turn of the century and the time period of such composers as Debussy, de Falla and especially Poulenc.

Mares showed through her interpretative skills that Cadzow's work had a special place in her heart.

The first movement was cleverly based, interlaced with jazz-fragmentation and rhythmical delicacies followed by a melancholic movement set in the lilting flavor of an Irish folk song. Exploding in the final movement in intricately modern polyphonic writing, the piece was full of delightful syncopation and spicy bi-tonality.

After all the heavy but important courses, it became for this writer one of the evening's finest realizations in this musical menu.

It will be interesting to follow Mares's development as she is a fine addition to the collection of internationally known Canadian artists.