

ChamberFest Cleveland: pianist Roman Rabinovich in Haydn sonatas at Dunham Tavern Museum (Dec. 16)

by Mike Telin



Over the course of three concerts, the outstanding pianist Roman Rabinovich performed fifteen of Haydn's keyboard sonatas as part of ChamberFest Cleveland's Winter Mini Festival. I heard the final recital at Dunham Tavern Museum on Friday, December 16.

Listening to the pianist's attractive and insightful interpretations of the five sonatas presented that evening made me wish I had been able to attend all three

concerts. The programs are part of Rabinovich's Haydn Sonata Project, during which he will play all 45 of the composer's sonatas over 2 years.

The warm, inviting space and its pleasing acoustics make the Dunham Tavern Barn the perfect location for a "salon" concert. Performing in the round, Rabinovich opened the program with the *Sonata in E-flat*, Hob XVI:16. Playing with a delicate touch, clear tone, and crisp articulations as he would throughout the evening, the pianist revealed a Haydn who is far more inventive than many give him credit for.

Rabinovich told the capacity audience that the orchestral-sounding *Sonata in c-sharp*, Hob XVI:36, illustrates the more serious, romantic side of Haydn. Here the pianist brought a grandeur to the opening movement, flawless technique to the scherzo, and exquisite beauty to the concluding slow movement.

Fast, dotted rhythms are in abundance in the opening of the *Sonata in C*, Hob XVI:21. Dedicated to Haydn's employer, the Prince of Esterházy, the Sonata is

full of humor, and Rabinovich highlighted every bit of it during his magical performance.

The second half of the program featured works that Haydn composed for the fortepiano. The progression in musical styles was in full evidence during the *Sonata in D*, Hob XVI:42, which Rabinovich played with aplomb. However, it was the concluding *Sonata in E-flat*, Hob XVI:52, composed for an English Broadwood piano, that brought the evening fully into the Classical style. Roman Rabinovich gave an alluring, playful performance which brought the masterful concert to its conclusion.

ChamberFest's Winter Mini Festival is a great addition to their outstanding musical offerings — may it continue into the future. And if we're lucky, Rabinovich and his Haydn Project will return for ChamberFest's summer season.

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