

CCMS: Pianist Richard Goode at Disciples Church (Feb. 22)

by Daniel Hathaway



Cleveland Chamber Music Society has recently had to deal with more than its fair share of postponements and cancellations, but when Cuarteto Casals cut short their U.S. Tour last month due to a medical emergency, the Society was lucky to be able to field a replacement.

Not another string quartet, but rather, the distinguished

pianist Richard Goode, who last performed on the series in 2016, and offered glowing and insightful readings of works by Schumann, Schubert, Bartók, and Beethoven at Disciples Christian Church on Tuesday evening, February 22.

“Readings” seems like an odd synonym for “performances,” but it’s apropos for Goode, one of the few pianists on the concert circuit who plays from the scores in his recitals. In the case of many performers who make a fetish out of memorization, details can erode over time, but Goode’s interpretations always sound like every original nuance in the composer’s score is in place.

Tuesday’s recital began in the ballroom with Schumann’s *Papillons*, a collection of ten unrelated waltzes and polonaises with an introduction and finale, meant to represent a masked ball. Goode played them freely, with appropriate rubato and healthy accents.

Schubert’s a-minor Sonata, D. 845 is quirky both rhythmically and harmonically, and the second-movement theme and variations presents the player with non-stop filigree

that even Chopin might have considered daunting. Goode effortlessly dispatched that fancy fingerwork with transparency and clarity, and pointed up the eccentricities in the finale.

Bartók's fifteen *Hungarian Peasant Songs*, widely varied in character and length, served as an attractive palate-cleanser before Beethoven's Op. 101 Sonata, a work Goode played at these concerts in 2016, and the first piece in what is generally considered the composer's late period. Here, Goode's playing channeled that of his teacher Claude Frank in its easy fastidiousness and good taste.

Disciples Church represented a new venue for the Chamber Music Society, which usually presents at Plymouth Church, but needs to look elsewhere when a piano is required. Disciples has recently reconfigured its former sanctuary into a flexible space for community arts. With good sightlines, comfortable, reconfigurable seating, and a pleasantly live acoustic, it worked well for Richard Goode's recital, which drew a sizable and enthusiastic crowd. Good parking too!

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