

Milos Milivojevic's Solo Recital, London - UK

Contributed by Roland Williams

Milos Milivojevic gave an outstanding solo recital in the Dukes Hall of the Royal Academy of Music on January 17th 2008 before a highly critical audience of students and musicians, including the Academy's Principal Sir Curtis Price, who showed great appreciation for a full length and flawless performance. In 2007 Milos won the RAM Club event held each year, a competition open to all Academy students with a major money prize plus the opportunity to give a solo recital organized by the Club. The 'RAM Club' is an association of all staff and past students. Being a prize of substance it attracts the Academy's best students from all departments and an outright win by an accordion player is a landmark event, both for Milos Milivojevic himself and also for the accordion.

Milos' programme demonstrated not only his huge skill and extreme dexterity but his obvious delight in showing what can be done with his instrument with music as wide apart as Scarlatti and modern composers Luciano Berio and Magnus Lindberg, two of several top contemporary composers writing for accordion. With his interpretation of Scarlatti in the beginning Milos reminds us that that whilst Scarlatti wrote predominantly for 18th century harpsichords of the Spanish Royal Palaces he used them to imitate other instruments he heard around him in Spain. Milos thus brings to this great but familiar music a fresh feel with considerable allure for the audience. Once captivated, the audience was plunged into a world of Berio's 'Sequenzas' in which the composer explores the extreme range and timbre of registration in 'Sequenza No 13', written for the classical accordion.

Before a presentation of Magnus Lindberg and his special treatment of the classical accordion in 'Jeux D'Anches' much akin to his renown treatment of orchestra, Milos introduced a movement from Mendelssohn's rarely heard 'Organ Sonata No 6' to which he gave a majestic fully rounded organ like sound appropriate to this music.

Playing movements from the original piano version of Greig's 'Holberg Suite', with its composer's pastiche of French Baroque, produced a similar effect at the start of the second half as Scarlatti at the beginning of the recital, especially with the virtuosic outer

movements. Milos was joined in the second half by The Brooks Quartet for a performance of three movements from Astor Piazzolla's 'Five Tango Sensations'. The group produced an elegant and beautifully tonally balanced performance, which had clearly been well rehearsed and prepared. Milos concluded his recital with an amazing virtuosic display with Pablo de Sarasate's 'Introduction and Tarantella'.

It is a mark of how far Milos Milivojevic is taking the accordion that following this success he has been invited to represent the Academy in a further event at the Wigmore Hall on Easter Monday March 24th. The Derek Butler Prize will be awarded to the best first year post-graduate student from the four London conservatoires – the Royal College of Music, the Royal Academy of Music, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and Trinity College of Music. The Academy has chosen Milos to represent it against a pianist, violinist and cellist from the other conservatoires.