

Postlude

Hungarian Pianist Geza Anda Heard In Debut With Ormandy's Orchestra

By Paul Hume

The great news of the Philadelphia Orchestra's concert last night in Constitution Hall was the completely satisfying bow of Hungarian pianist Geza Anda.

Under the most sympathetic conducting of Eugene Ormandy, and with the support of an orchestra whose tone for the Brahms B Flat Piano Concerto is unrivalled anywhere in the world to our knowledge, Anda brought in a performance of the famous giant among concertos that may long stand as a model for other pianists, few of whom will ever succeed in approaching it.

Anda is in his early thirties. His home is in Switzerland, his musical understanding places him among the world's cosmopolitan artists who would be at home wherever

he sat before a fine piano. There is something in the way he begins to play that lets you know at once that he is utterly dependable.

At the same time you realize that this dependability is not going to hold back anything in the way of fire. He can thunder but he only does so when the music calls for it.

In between large effects he provides a scale of graduated sounds, constantly at his slightest command, that reminds you of the piano's capacity for beautiful sound. His scales and arpeggios are never of the same volume throughout unless they are so marked by the composer.

There is light and shadow everywhere, even in this concerto which is so often—and so wrongly—described as a battle between orchestra and pianist, in which the pianist usually

loses. Not at all. It is a great canvas in which the painter gives both conductor and soloists the opportunity for rich effect. Only those lacking imagination paint all in red.

Anda, with the noble assistance of first cellist Lorne Munroe, made of the slow movement the kind of sustained reverie that produces a spiritual benediction of enormous weight. I have always wanted to hear it go as slowly as that, and now I am convinced that no faster tempo is right. It was a moment of absolute perfection.

The Philadelphia Orchestra and its conductor bring us many things. For Geza Anda and this Brahms Concerto we shall always remember them gratefully.

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