

Alexey Botvinov wows audience

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Not many pianists have the technical and emotional scope of Alexey Botvinov. His extraordinary versatility was showcased in an Oct. 22 recital at the YAMAHA Music Hall in Jakarta. Botvinov opened his recital with *Chaconne in D minor* from Violin Partita No.4, BWV 1004, a piece by J.S. Bach. There was a fascinating ebb and flow to his playing, echoing the dynamism and tension of this typical baroque composition.

Botvinov again demonstrated his range and artistry when he played three works by F.Chopin: *Nocturne in D flat major*, Op.27 No. 2, *Ballade No.1 in G minor* Op. 23 and *Ballade No.4 in F minor* Op. 52. He really captured Chopin's romantic style while playing the pieces. With his high fingering technique, he explored all of the chords without hesitancy; the music slowly and smoothly swelling from pianissimo to fortissimo.

The Ukrainian-born pianist was really in his element performing the works of the Russian composers Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky and Sergei Rachmaninoff, his powerful finger work producing a sound that could have filled a concert hall of thousands.

It has been said that Rachmaninoff, a composer, pianist and conductor, had enormous hands that were able to span the interval of a 13th on the keyboard, which makes many of his works extremely difficult to perform. But Botvinov interpreted them without any difficulty, and no false notes. After performing Tchaikovsky's works from *Seasons*, Op. 37a, *Rachmaninoff 4 Preludes* and *Elegie* Op. 3 No. 1 (which is one of his favorites), Botvinov demonstrated his other talent as a music arranger, when he played *Poem* Op. 38 no.6 *Au!*, *Romance* Op.21 No.7 : *How Fair This Spot* and Op.14 no. 11: *Spring Water* which were all composed by Sergei Rachmaninoff, but arranged for solo piano by Botvinov.

Standing ovations were given at the end of the encore: *Prelude in G minor* Op. 23 No. 5 by Rachmaninoff

Despite his vast experience and status as a famous pianist with many concerts and recordings under his belt, Botvinov is a very humble and low-profile person. He chatted with the audience after the concert, signing autographs and posing for photos.

Botvinov really is a pianist for whom everything seems possible.