

### Somebody Give Rustem Hayroudinoff Directions to Carnegie Hall!

by *Doug Stumpf*

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Over Martin Luther King Day, Rustem Hayroudinoff made his New York debut in front of a sold-out crowd at the Frick Museum. One of the best and most exciting pianists of the younger Russian generation, he has in the last few years gained considerable attention for his spectacular renditions on CD of Rachmaninoff's Preludes (opus 23 and opus 32) and his *Etudes-Tableaux* (opus 33 and 39).

The 13 Preludes of Rachmaninoff's opus 32, in fact, made up the second half of Hayroudinoff's Frick program, and it's hard to think of anyone who plays them better. Notorious for their technical demands, they challenge the player to make musical sense of massive chords and a blizzard of notes. Hayroudinoff brings to them electrifying power and passion, but always expressed with a beautiful tone, even in *fortissimo*. And he is positively a genius at digging out the inner voices that most pianists don't realize are even there.

The first part of the program was made up of three Preludes and Fugues from Shostakovich's *24 Preludes and Fugues* (opus 87) in a rendition so authoritative that one wishes Hayroudinoff would record the entire set; *Prelude, Fugue et Variation* (opus 18), a schmaltzy but pretty oddity by Cesar Franck; and Chopin's fourth Ballade (opus 52). If Hayroudinoff does not make the contrasting sections of this last entirely cohere and build to the tempestuous coda, there is no question he has the chops for the piece and will ultimately make it his own.

The only question that remained after the recital was, Why isn't Hayroudinoff better known and playing a larger venue, such as the big stage at Carnegie Hall?

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