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By MICHAEL KIMMELMAN

Andreas Bach

Auspicious debuts of the sort made by Andreas Bach at the 92d Street Y last Saturday night are rare. The pianist, from Westerwald, Germany, is 19 years old but betrayed few of the flaws one naturally expects from a teen-age performer. His performances were graced by an exceptional intelligence and sensitivity. If this concert served as fair illustration, Mr. Bach would seem to be at the start of a significant career.

The young player — who sported an Aubrey Beardsley-style haircut and carried himself with endearing modesty — possessed a rock-solid technique that was never employed for its own sake but that allowed him to untangle neatly the various contrapuntal lines in Honegger's "Prélude, Arioso et Fughetta sur le nom de BACH," and to move with unusual ease through the knottiest passages in Liszt's B-minor Ballade — a work that, for once, was made to sound like more than merely a showpiece.

Mr. Bach displayed a natural, understated way with rubato, a keen understanding of rests and silences, and a serious, unerringly poetic spirit, one that allowed him to create an atmosphere of rapt concentration during the adagio movement in Beethoven's "Tempest" Sonata.

Unlike so many young players, he avoided rushing or pushing up the volume to make statements more emphatically. He understood just how to hold back and pace the drama for the most effect. His tendency was toward performances of introspection and subtle coloristics, even during the F-minor Sonata (Op. 5) by Brahms, with which he closed his program.



Andreas Bach

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