

# pressquotes

## DANIIL TRIFONOV - PIANO

"...the 20-year-old Daniil Trifonov, fresh from his victory at the International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, showed astonishing skills in works by Scriabin, Chopin and Liszt... this young man is a formidable virtuoso."

Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*, Aug 2011

"His performance was fundamentally reserved and inward, but with abundant colour and imaginative, subtle effects. This was playing rich in insight and intensity."

*Vancouver Sun*, May 2011

"...the extremely talented and sensitive Daniil Trifonov"

*The Warsaw Voice*, October 2010

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## International Piano Series, Southbank Centre

### Scriabin, Liszt & Chopin

"Trifonov is an utterly thrilling prospect; technically fearless and with a musical temperament to match..."

The Chopin Preludes had the same contrasting combination of brilliance and ravishment, sharply focused vignettes contrasted with the panache of a born showman. Trifonov's articulation in some of the faster numbers was breathtaking, but it was also superbly controlled, just as his ability to float the simplest melody showed his awareness of when the music could be left to speak for itself. The first two encores were sharply contrasted, too: a delicate Medtner Fairy Tale was followed by Guido Agosti's transcription of the Infernal Dance from Stravinsky's Firebird, ferociously, swaggeringly delivered."

Andrew Clements, *The Guardian*, December 2012

"Trifonov's real business lay with Liszt's 'Sonata in B minor' and Chopin's 'Preludes'. His achievement with Liszt's switchback journey through heaven and hell was to make it appear seamless and, by terracing his sound, to suggest vast distances: the lyricism had a visionary quality, and the fury was conveyed with a light and steely touch."

Michael Church, *The Independent*, December 2012

"Daniil Trifonov is already preceded by an exciting reputation wherever he appears. But not even a CV like this guarantees the musical maturity the 21-year-old Russian displayed in his Southbank debut recital, where he made Liszt's massive Sonata in B minor the centrepiece in every sense.

Between the power required in this work's demonic flourishes and the phantasmagorical musings called for elsewhere in its huge single movement span (both magnificently achieved), the most impressive aspect was the sense of epic space Trifonov brought to the music. But then he had already found the elusive pulse of Scriabin's Second Sonata, beautifully weaving together its pensive fragments resembling half-remembered Chopin Nocturnes.

When it came to Chopin himself and a complete traversal of the Twenty-Four Preludes, Trifonov launched the opening "Agitato" without under agitation. Bound together by a natural sense of pianistic colour and meticulous pedalling, these were understated yet never under-characterised performances."

John Allison, *Sunday Telegraph*, December 2012

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## **Philharmonia Orchestra / Lorin Maazel Prokofiev Piano Concerto No.2**

“Southbank audiences barely had time to draw breath after Daniil Trifonov’s barnstorming recital before the young pianist reappeared, this time to gobble up Prokofiev’s Piano Concerto No.2 with the Philharmonia Orchestra. This, too, was an extraordinary performance, made all the more moving by the fact that Prokofiev himself was, like Trifonov, barely 22 when he composed and first performed the original work. Two things epitomise Trifonov at the moment: his almost palpable hunger and thirst for music-making (he sat on the edge of his seat after the interval, mesmerised by the second half); and his prodigious command of pianistic touch, timbre and technique.

Prokofiev’s second concerto is itself a veritable encyclopaedia of pianism and imaginative invention. Some pianists don’t tackle it at all; those who do often simply get through the work — and that is enough. But Trifonov played as though he might have composed the concerto himself, in a white heat of inspiration, and with a gleeful ability to recreate physically the wildest stretches of Prokofiev’s imagination.

From his long, limpid stroking of the keys at the start, to the sheer variety of spikiness and wit that ensued; from the colossal cadenza that almost unseated him from the piano stool, to the contraction of the body for the concentrated moto perpetuo of the Scherzo — Trifonov set up a formidable challenge for the Philharmonia, even for Lorin Maazel himself.”

Hilary Finch, *The Times*, December 2012

“Prokofiev was 22 when he gave the first performance of his Second Piano Concerto, and a famous description of the occasion notes that when he appeared on the platform, he looked “like a high-school student”. Daniil Trifonov, playing the work with the Philharmonia under Lorin Maazel, is 21, and as he walked on to the platform, lanky and gawky in his suit and tie, you couldn’t help but feel that the same description applied. The premiere ended, notoriously, in a riot. This time round, however, the concerto rightly brought the house down.

It’s a monster of a piece, flamboyantly self-conscious in its difficulty. Grinning from ear to ear and clearly enjoying every second, Trifonov threw himself into it with a recklessness that was engaging in itself. Technically, much of it was extraordinary. He whirled through both scherzo and finale with devil-may-care panache. The intermezzo teetered nicely between lyricism and the grotesque.”

Tim Ashley, *The Guardian*, December 2012

## **Edinburgh International Festival / Scriabin, Medtner, Stravinsky, Debussy & Chopin**

“Following his wins last year in two of the world’s highest-profile keyboard contests – the Tchaikovsky and Rubinstein competitions – expectations were high for 21-year-old Russian pianist Daniil Trifonov’s EIF recital. And he more than surpassed them, in a breathtaking concert combining boundless athleticism, searing power and an effortless musicality.

It almost goes without saying that his technique was immaculate – as demonstrated in the devilish demands of the Chopin op.25 Studies with which he ended his recital, from the stormy, surging octaves of no.10 to the scintillating chains of thirds in no.6. He paced the set expertly, characterising each piece vividly yet slowly building to the shattering and stormy final two movements, which he delivered with elemental force.

Yet he was even more impressive in the lucid beauty he brought to music that’s less technically challenging. His tonal control was breathtaking in the first book of Debussy’s Images: he had the astonishing ability to shape a phrase through his control of tone colour rather than by pulling the

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piece's rhythms around too much, with the result that his interpretations combined classical precision and poise with intense emotion.

He brought brilliant clarity to the complex harmonies of the unfamiliar Scriabin Third Sonata, with which he opened his concert, and his traversal of three movements from Stravinsky's Firebird were breathtaking in their sheer pianistic fireworks..."

David Kettle, *The Scotsman*, August 2012

**Israel Philharmonic / Zubin Mehta**  
**Rachmaninov *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini***

"The showers of notes sparkle like stars in the desert night. A wonderful performance."

Norman Lebrecht, blog on *Artsjournal.com*, January 2012

**Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre / Valery Gergiev / Carnegie Hall**  
**Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No.1**

"As soon as he lunged into the opening chords of the Tchaikovsky it was apparent that he had taken control. Although slight of stature he obtained a rich, full sound from the piano without banging or forcing, even in the octave passage of the first movement which he executed at blazing speed. This was a young man's performance, full of energy and drive, but never did one get the impression that Trifonov was simply aiming for effect. He almost became one with the piano, treating it as an extension of himself to project a highly personal vision of the piece. Pushing the tempo here, lingering lovingly there, he nevertheless made everything sound natural and refreshing.

Technique is simply not an issue for Trifonov, and he knows how to apply this freedom in the service of the music. In his two encores – Chopin's Grand Valse brillante and Liszt's La campanella – the word "storyteller" kept coming to mind. Crouching in front of the piano, Trifonov knows how to get inside a piece and make it come to life. The Chopin was full of tasteful nuances and literally danced, while the Liszt showed off Trifonov's incredible passagework and control of structure."

*Classicalsource.com*, October 2011

**Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre / Valery Gergiev / George Mason University's Centre for the Arts / Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No.1**

"Toward the end of the first movement, [Trifonov] played with such intensity that it seemed as if this moment was the greatest or most powerful thing that one could possibly experience... This is a major artist in the making."

*Washington Post*, October 2011

"Trifonov, a young soloist who is destined for fame."

*Washington Examiner*, October 2011

**London Symphony Orchestra / Valery Gergiev / Barbican Centre, London**  
**Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No.1**

"Here is a performer who already knows a huge amount not just about technique, but performance itself. Dispatching the Piano Concerto No 1, what was most noticeable about this fizzing display was showmanship without ostentatious theatrics, and a generous willingness, particularly in the balletic second movement, to let Gergiev and the by now fully fired-up London Symphony players to take the lead where the music required it. But he had the spotlight all to himself for Liszt's Campanella, an encore delivered with delicate panache."

Neil Fisher, *The Times*, September 2011

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"Daniil Trifonov, 20, winner of the 2011 piano prize, possesses almost boundless potential... The charismatic young Russian tore into the Tchaikovsky first piano concerto with exhilarating confidence and formidable technique. Let's hope he goes on to the great things of which he is clearly capable."

Martin Kettle, *The Guardian*, September 2011

"The way Daniil Trifonov played, you'd say he was a mature master, rather than a mere 20-year-old. Power in spades, crystalline passage-work, and a pearlised singing tone: he's already got it all, and his encore – Liszt's 'La Campanella' – had both flawless delicacy, and an engaging modesty."

5 stars

Michael Church, *Independent*, September 2011

"Trifonov's Tchaikovsky First Piano Concerto more than matched expectations. He gave the opening salvo a spring in the step that immediately banished the "warhorse" tag, before uncovering a multitude of voices in the first movement cadenza... Trifonov is more than capable of the bewitching virtuosity this concerto invites, as his finale amply demonstrated..."

Andrew Clark, *Financial Times*, September 2011

"Trifonov's fingers are remarkably fleet, the notes unfailingly clear even at the motorway speeds... Trifonov was in many ways sensational, in love with the piano and everything he can do with it... Make no mistake, Daniil Trifonov is one hell of a talent."

*Classicalsource.com*, September 2011