

We went to see the Pollini concert at the Kennedy Center on 10/27. The seats were wonderful - stage box above and behind the pianist, so we could see his hands on the keyboard and also the action of the keys in the piano. And the sound was just great.

He played a Beethoven - Chopin concert. The first half was B's piano sonata No. 24, F# major, Op. 78, not often heard, followed by No. 23 Op. 57, the famed Appassionata. Both done almost perfectly - my one quibble was that the slow movement of 23 was not quite delicate enough. Its outer movements were fantastic, easily the equal of the greats I've heard on disc and on stage.

The second half was Chopin: Two Nocturnes Op. 32, Ballade No. 3 Op. 47 and the Funeral March Sonata, Op. 35. All done to perfection. The middle section of the Funeral March movement was exquisitely delicate, tugging at your emotions with its sweetness, but not falling into the saccharine. Encores were all Chopin: Raindrop Prelude, a whole Ballade, and an Etude.

I totally disagree with the WashPost critic (see link). He was swayed by the pianist's reputation for coldness (as quoted in the first sentence of his review) more than by what he heard. It was not chilling at all, but for the most part very warmly performed with as much feeling as intellect.

At Pollini Recital, a Chill in the Air

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A7877-2004Oct28.html>