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### Alon Goldstein at PYP: Choice selections, packed with meaning

By Peter Dobrin, August 18, 2016

Alon Goldstein

Alon Goldstein is always searching for beauty, and he nearly always finds it in no fewer than a dozen varieties. The pianist played a recital Tuesday night at the Curtis Institute as a faculty member for this summer's Philadelphia Young Pianists' Academy. The repertoire was choice. And though the program was constructed of familiar composers, it seemed to make several points all at once.

Goldstein told the audience the theme was orchestral, and his playing certainly supported the claim. **He lit lines and textures in Bach's Italian Concerto with colors by the paletteful, though his equally fine sense of articulation provided shape.** The first movement in particular was one of those wondrous marriages of organization and emotion, heart and mind. He evoked harp, percussion, and brass in Debussy's Masks, and a Prokofiev orchestra in the last of Ginastera's Three Argentinian Dances.

But the program also suggested other meanings. Arranged chronologically, starting at Bach and ending at Ginastera, it was about the loosening of formal structures and the march of harmonic progress. Despite the pianist's orchestral ambition, it also beautifully demonstrated the technical leap of the piano.

Schubert's Wanderer Fantasy advanced the instrument miles in a single piece; it is downright Lisztian in its virtuosity. Goldstein emphasized the link by following it (though interrupted by intermission) with Liszt's transcription of Wagner's "Liebestod" from Tristan und Isolde. So technically demanding is the Schubert that a few passages posed a challenge to the pianist. No matter. Interpretatively, it was an imaginative and in some ways unusual look at the piece, slowing at a critical point to shade an emotion, or deploying an unexpected bit of articulation.

Goldstein - who studied with Leon Fleisher at the Peabody Conservatory - has a personal view of the piece grounded in expressiveness and a focus on varying tone that suggested Schubert lieder. Liszt technique and Schubert song: Goldstein seemed to hold both ideas simultaneously in a constantly shifting and elegant balance.