



October 2005

## Music Diary...

The series of Tuesday lunchtime concerts in Winchester Cathedral is nearing its close and for the penultimate one on October 11, French-born pianist Emmanuel Despax gave a remarkably mature performance of works by Beethoven and Chopin.

After five years at the Menuhin School, Emmanuel won a scholarship to the Royal College of Music in 2002, since when, in addition to gaining many prestigious awards, he has developed an active performing career.

Opening with Beethoven's Sonata No 31 in A flat Opus 110, his handling of the first bars marked "con amabilata" was indicative of a well thought-out approach to a basically lyrical work. Judicious dynamic contrasts in the scherzo presaged a heavenly adagio before the great final movement consisting of several distinct but connecting sections. The fugue that appears early in these returned in the last to give a conclusion of considerable emotional splendour. Beautifully warm tone was of great benefit to the whole of this account and again to the Chopin Etudes Opus 10 numbers 1, 3, 4 and 6, as well as Opus 25 numbers 11 and 12.

In all the performances of these, the outstanding feature was his sensitive musicality and an ability to exploit the cantabile sounds that are possible on the piano.

No 3 of Opus 10 was a splendid example, following the wide-ranging arpeggios of No 1.

The sheer velocity of No 4 was a brilliant display of clearly articulated fingerwork before the relative gentleness and poignancy of No 6.

The selections from Opus 25 made a fine conclusion to offerings that, in addition to exploiting technique to the full, still have great musical value. This young man passed all the numerous tests with spectacular success. One was glad that time allowed for an encore, which confirmed his highly developed artistry.

<http://www.emmanueldespax.com> - review: UK Press pages