

The final recital in Carlisle Music Society's 2016/2017 season was given by Italian/Swiss pianist Mauro Lo Conte.

He opened his recital with J. S. Bach's French Suite in G major. This was a lyrical performance with each of the dance movements well characterised and projected. Beginning with a romantic Allemande and ending with a sparkling and light Gigue, all were performed with a great deal of control. I particularly liked the embellishments added by the pianist, although in the Sarabande and Loure they were slightly overdone and took away from the simplicity of Bach's writing.

Beethoven's Sonata in D minor, Op.31 no 2, "The Tempest " followed. The Largo-Allegro was for me played a touch too slowly, did not flow and therefore lacked "stormy" character. The recitative section at the beginning of the recapitulation was played with exquisite beauty of tone and full control of gentle sound. The Adagio was nicely played and shaped, with well controlled left hand arpeggio passages. The Allegretto was played at a comfortable pace with a lovely, gentle touch.

After the interval we heard Schumann's great Fantasie in C. Like all Schumann's compositions, this work makes massive demands on the performer's emotional involvement, combined with technical ease. Despite being performed with great control and accuracy I felt that Lo Conte's performance lacked the passion and expressive content necessary for a truly successful performance.

The opening of Schumann's Kreisleriana, which followed as an encore, was played with a lot more freedom and excitement.

Overall, it was a lovely evening to end Carlisle Music Society's concert season.

Alicja Fiderkiewicz