

Carlisle Music Society

St. Cuthbert's Church, Carlisle

Riyad Nicolas, Piano. 27 October 2016

Carlisle Music Society has a happy knack of choosing winners. These days there is a wide range of pianists to pick from. But the latest, a rising star from the east, Riyad Nicolas, has a unique merit; he comes from Aleppo.

Beginning his recital on Thursday 27th, he gave no sign of the stress he must feel as his friends and family struggle at home. The epic late Beethoven Op. 110 sonata showed his technique was perfect for the task, his quiet authority and meticulous preparation a pleasure to behold, the opening phrases of the sonata a joy. Moving to Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit*, big fireworks in *Scarbo* - yet, when called for, the touch of an angel's feather. In fact, terrific.

After the interval, two sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti whose output was prodigious. These, seldom heard in recital, called for yet more refined technical dexterity. Admirable.

Chopin's *Polonaise Fantaisie* is again rarely heard and not altogether typical of the composer's output. This preceded the 5th Scriabin sonata, a very different work, ushering in modernity to the early 20th century. More fireworks, beautifully executed.

For an encore the Chopin Étude known as *Winter Wind* giving a purely musical, sensitive prelude to possible winter storms ahead!

Next month Lithuanian violist Ugne Tiskute with Romanian-born pianist Alexandra Vaduva appear on 17th.

John Warmingham