

ARTS & CULTURE

Pianist Behzod Abduraimov will feed your inner romantic in upcoming KC show

BY PATRICK NEAS

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Behzod Abduraimov is currently an artist-in-residence at Park University's International Center for Music. **ABDOURAKOV NISSOR**

[Behzod Abduraimov](#) knows how to cut to the chase. The London International Piano Competition winner is calling his upcoming piano recital “Love and Death,” and it doesn’t get more fundamental than that.

The 28-year-old artist-in-residence at [Park University’s International Center for Music](#) will present a night of romantic piano music Jan. 19 at the 1900 Building.

This is a program for the kind of person who can burst into tears while listening to Wagner’s “Tristan and Isolde.” As a matter of fact, Franz Liszt’s transcription of the Liebestod, or Love-Death from “Tristan and Isolde,” opens Abduraimov’s recital. After that is Liszt’s turbulent Sonata in B minor, which Abduraimov describes as a “mini opera.”

“It’s like storytelling with so many ups and downs, from the very dramatic to very intimate climaxes,” Abduraimov said. “It is incredible how Liszt was able to take the same themes and transform them so drastically within the whole sonata. The colors and emotions make it a very unique experience for listener as well as for performer. What appeals to me the most about Wagner and Liszt, that they both are very poetic and narrative. In Liszt’s sonata these qualities are also combined with ultra virtuosity.”

The second half of the concert is devoted to a piano transcription of 10 pieces from Sergei Prokofiev’s “Romeo and Juliet.”

Perhaps the greatest ballet work of the 20th century, “Romeo and Juliet” is filled with glorious romantic themes and dark, ominous drama. Prokofiev, who was a touring piano virtuoso himself, pulled out all the stops in his piano transcription, creating a brilliant keyboard tour-de-force.

“These ten miniatures are highly imaginative, they represent typical Prokofiev’s expression of great contrasts from grotesque humor to touching lyricism,” Abduraimov said.

Abduraimov, who recently performed with Valery Gergiev and the Mariinsky Orchestra at Helzberg Hall, has been living the life of a hard-working touring artist for the past year.

Beyond playing with orchestras and collaborating with conductors like Michael Tilson Thomas and Gustavo Dudamel, Abduraimov makes plenty of time for chamber music. For example, this year he did a series of concerts with Norwegian cellist Truls Mørk.

“I’m so looking forward to playing these three masterpieces,” he said of his upcoming concert. “Each is challenging in its own way. I feel very lucky to share this music with audiences in Kansas City and elsewhere.”

7:30 p.m. Jan. 19. 1900 Building, 1900 Shawnee Mission Parkway, Mission Woods. \$10-\$30. 913-730-1905 or <https://tinyurl.com/ycxackkn>.

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