

# NICOLAS NAMORADZE

p i a n i s t + c o m p o s e r

a c c l a i m

INTERNATIONAL PIANO MAGAZINE

Michael Church

April 25, 2020

I'm not often lost for words, but Nicolas Namoradze's recital almost defeated me. I wasn't expecting anything amazing: he'd won the Honens competition, and this gig was his reward, but winning a comp is no guarantee of greatness. Yet from the opening phrase of Scriabin's 'Black Mass' sonata he had me hooked: those notes had honeyed grace, and the rest of the work unfolded in an opalescent glow, every bar being touched with beauty. I've never heard this puzzling work make such persuasive sense.

Namoradze then segued into Bach, with the Ninth Sinfonia followed by the sixth Partita whose Toccata led majestically on to six lovingly-characterised movements; the closing Gigue, which turns itself upside down and inside out, came with an exultant craziness which was never less than technically immaculate.

The programme for the second half didn't sound auspicious: York Bowen's Twelve Studies Opus 46, followed by six Etudes by a certain Mr Namoradze. Bowen is now all but forgotten, but his studies, written in 1919, are a fascinating blend of Romanticism and modernist experimentation. In this player's hands they were riveting, each one being brought out like rabbit from a conjuror's hat and allowed to run (very fast) wherever it liked. And if the virtuosity was dazzling, Namoradze's own studies, which seemed like a continuation of Bowen's, were doubly so. Finally five Scriabin encores delivered with a seraphic smile: through a slightly-open door we could see him literally jumping up and down with excitement in the backstage moments between coming back on and astonishing us. Come back and astonish us some more.

BOSTON MUSICAL INTELLIGENCER

Victor Khatutsky

March 2, 2020

Alchemist Nicolas Namoradze brought his lab of chromatic arts to the filled-to-capacity Calderwood Hall on Sunday, wearing his transmuting intentions on his lab apron sleeve... He enunciated and voiced to perfection, conveying a strongly felt concept, albeit not always a familiar one... Namoradze's own Etudes evoked Ligeti's Etudes, though much lighter in mood throughout. Engaging and brilliant, with names from Major Scales to Double Notes, they

ironically suggested the theme of having fun during inevitable long practice sessions. But they also served as ample vehicles to demonstrate the composer's wit along with digital prowess.

KVIRA

George Laliashvili  
February 29, 2020

Nicolas Namoradze's London debut was a clear sign that he will have a very impressive career. The program itself was capacious and varied, presenting four contrasting composers and focusing on the particular connections found between them... Nicolas Namoradze is a musician with remarkable values. There is such power and conviction in his playing that one can hardly believe his age – one hears a multifaceted, wise master at one with the instrument. We hear so many young pianists, especially in London, and many of them are very talented and undoubtedly impressive – but the depth and sophistication that Namoradze displays is truly exceptional, earning him a special reputation among the new generation of musicians.

CULBYT

Lina Goncharskaya  
December 11, 2019

"I discovered an amazing, unconventional personality – 27-year-old pianist and composer Nicolas Namoradze, who has something to say to the world... In Scriabin's F Sharp Major Sonata, the pianist's super-sensual musicality seemed to find its Grail... Namoradze feels everything in his own way, whether it's desire, impulse, passion, intimacy – and with a sense of proportion in everything. Nicolas Namoradze is not just a poet of the piano, he is its artist. He displays no visible effort, an ease of imagination, harmony of proportions, perfect balance, impeccability and originality in tone. Each phrase seems to be crafted and considered, yet at the same time breathes with true vitality. They seem familiar (it is tempting to draw an analogy with Sofronitsky, the best performer of Scriabin, in my opinion) yet also surprising and unexpected, with unique tempi, pauses and contrasts of sonority. He possesses a sophisticated and rich palette of sound shades – what myriad colors in one pianissimo, sometimes brooding, sometimes windy, sometimes careless, sometimes wise – supplemented by an inquisitiveness and strength of mind, and this spirituality is transmitted to the audience. Namoradze can achieve all of this with his fingers, without having to resort to acting with faces or body movements.

After the Scriabin, Namoradze played his own Etudes I-VI – and this, believe me, is an alternative universe, mobile, like a breathing Solaris, almost magical, with whimsical, unpredictable behavior... Namoradze's sharp mind gives birth to things that are hard to play, but which are charmingly simple in their complexity. Everything is not as it seems, starting with a system that seems tonal, and ending with sonorous tricks in the spirit of Escher's paintings."

CLASSICAL VOICE AMERICA

Wynne Delacoma

September 17, 2019

"Namoradze, a rising young Georgian pianist and composer, was similarly eloquent in the Schumann concerto. Lingered over Schumann's tender, singing melodies, shading each phrase with precisely chosen color, he drew us into an intimate universe. In its virtuoso flights, his sparkling runs and chords flashed by like quicksilver."

MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL

Elaine Schmidt

September 16, 2019

"Namoradze captured all of these elements in a charismatic performance that ranged from running passages played in shimmering whispers to bold emphatic declarations. This was a captivating delivery of an exquisite piece of music."

CALGARY HERALD

Kenneth DeLong

September 6, 2019

"Namoradze is not your conventional competition virtuoso. As it concerns virtuosity, however, Namoradze yields nothing to overtly flashier pianists, as was evident in his stunning encore of the well-known D-sharp minor Etude by Scriabin that concluded his program.

Fundamentally, however, Namoradze wears his enormous technique lightly. He sits quietly, with mostly just his fingers in evidence. His playing is effortless to a degree that can hardly be imagined, and the focus of his performance is entirely upon musical values. And here the range of his imagination in the shaping of line, control of texture, and fleetness in execution takes one's breath away... It was quasi-mystical experience, in which the sound of the instrument, poetic ideas, textures and musical figures were combined in a unique synthesis.

Namoradze took his audience into his own special musical place, one that certainly involved technical execution, but where the aural center was always on melody and where texture and shape intertwine... Namoradze performed two Scriabin works as encores, happily for me two of my favorite pieces, the early C-sharp minor etude and the equally famous D-sharp minor etudes previously mentioned. Both were the last word in how this music might be played, and served as capstone pieces in a concert as impressive as any I have recently heard and which brought the audience to its feet in its enthusiastic admiration."

## ONGAKU NO TOMO

Hiroko Ueda

July 18, 2019

"The selection of pieces by Namoradze, himself a composer, was intriguing... His etudes are brilliantly composed, and I was fascinated by how he incorporated typical elements of etudes with harmonic transformation. The recital program was nicely selected, as if one travels from the Romantic to Impressionism to the modern period... Listening with much interest and pleasure, I was impressed by his technique and wide range of expression... It was a recital full of delight and mysteries, which ended almost like a reincarnation."

## WERDENER NACHRICHTEN

Peter Noçon

July 7, 2019

"Nicolas Namoradze sparkled on the piano... The spotless performance earned great applause... The grand ovation led to four encores that brought the concert to a close by transporting the mood into one of romantic lyricism."

## CONCERTONET

Roman Markowicz

February 21, 2019

"He is a pianist who proved that, once in a while, the distinguished members of the jury make a good choice and select a winner who plays like a true artist; who impresses not with pyrotechnics but rather with keen intelligence, a rich tonal palette and refinement... It was a most auspicious debut by an artist representing that rare breed, a thinking virtuoso. There are young pianists whom I like or admire very much for their strictly pianistic accomplishments. Nicolas Namoradze deserves not only admiration but a deeply felt respect."

## BLOGCRITICS

Jon Sobel

February 15, 2019

"Only in his 20s, the New York-based pianist is a deep investigator of musical resonances over the centuries, an emphasis he touched on in our recent interview. His choice to flow directly from the Scriabin into Bach's Sinfonia No. 9 in F minor brilliantly illuminated the kind of continuity a perceptive mind can find... Namoradze has fully grasped the intellectual heft of these pieces too. Thanks in large part to the Honens prize, he has a busy concertizing and recording schedule. All indications are that his multiple gifts have well prepared him."

NEW YORK CLASSICAL REVIEW

David Wright

February 11, 2019

"Nicolas Namoradze is a pianist with a lot to say. And he likes to say it softly. The top-prize winner of the 2018 Honens International Piano Competition in Calgary, Alberta, made an impressive New York recital debut Sunday night at Carnegie's Zankel Hall with an unconventional program of (in this order) Scriabin, Bach, Schumann, and his own compositions. Like all recital programs, this one offered plenty of opportunities to play loud, and the 26-year-old native of the Republic of Georgia rose to them handsomely, without ever losing his cool demeanor on the piano bench. But the moments that linger long in the memory are the pianissimos. Long stretches of pianissimo, layered, multicolored, deep in thought or swirling like a spring breeze. Pianissimos dense with possibility, and pianissimos that just are."

NEUE ZÜRCHER ZEITUNG

Malte Hemmerich

October 25, 2018

"[Nicolas Namoradze] was the most unique of the finalists. In his solo recital, the experienced competitor even played his own compositions. He commanded Beethoven's Quintet for Piano and Winds Op. 16 with unbelievable precision and small inflections that made one sit up and take notice. The chamber music program was followed by a reading of the 2nd Piano Concerto by Brahms, performed with a thoroughly compelling restlessness. One would want to pay to hear him even for just the sheer inexhaustible abundance of colors that Namoradze elicits from the piano." *Translated from German*

CALGARY HERALD

Kenneth DeLong

September 11, 2018

"It is frequently the case that there can be a measure of controversy surrounding these events when the audience and jury don't see eye to eye. But this was not the case here. As with the two previous winners of the competition, Namoradze is not the conventional competition pianist, but his individuality was evident from the outset. While he certainly has the virtuosity to spare, he gained the top spot through his remarkable clarity of execution, refinement and variety of tone, and his uncanny ability to make even the most ordinary passagework sound meaningful and distinctive..."

The first prize went to Namoradze, someone who might be called a pianist's pianist. The refinement of his playing was of international standard, and everywhere his interpretative skills commanded attention and admiration. This was noticeably the case in his fine account of

Schumann's difficult Humoresque and perhaps even more in the performance of his own etudes – a daring thing to program."

#### MUSICAL AMERICA

Stephen Cera

September 10, 2018

"In the Brahms Concerto No. 2, Namoradze – also a soundtrack producer and composer – voiced the mellow rhetoric in long-breathed lines, and consistently built textures from the ground up. He addressed technical challenges, such as the notorious 'double octaves' in the second movement, with relative ease. It was a terrific match of performer and repertoire, and Namoradze appeared relaxed throughout, which was no small achievement.."

#### THE WHOLE NOTE

Stephen Cera

September 10, 2018

"[Namoradze's] rendition of the Brahms Piano Concerto No. 2 (one of the longest and most demanding in the repertoire) was etched in long lines and executed with an apparent ease that in the moment erased thoughts of this work's reputation as a beast to be tamed. Not so for Namoradze, who looked and sounded as comfortable playing this work as he had been with three of his own virtuosic Etudes in the Semifinals."

#### CONCERTONET

Michael Johnson

September 7, 2018

"For the Brahms Piano Concerto No. 2 Nicolas Namoradze chose a warmer-voiced Steinway. This factor surely helped bring forth the grandeur and sweep of the opening Allegro non troppo, accompanied by equal expansiveness from the orchestra. He seized the essence of the second movement (Allegro appassionato) from its first seconds, and ably expressed the many subtleties of the slow movement. The tight and sensitive partnership between pianist and conductor were once again evident in the concluding movement. And once again the audience gave vociferous approval... Definitely a talent to watch and listen for."

Version of October 27, 2020

[nicolasnamoradze.com](http://nicolasnamoradze.com)