



Three Piano Virtuosi



Third DOVER SOCIETY/TOWN COUNCIL Recital

by Jack Woolford

IT CAN'T BE FAR FROM UNIQUE, either in the UK or anywhere in the world, to have, as two hundred of us did on Saturday April 17, a third free recital, this time by three piano virtuosi, in the splendid theatre/ concert hall of the Astor College for the Arts.

We already well know (and indeed love) the consummate artistry of Russian Yuri Tykhonenko who (characteristically?) opened the concert by substituting an ordinary chair for the piano stool, and then played a Chopin Scherzo and Fantasia with all his thunderous power and whispering delicacy. Liszt's Tarantella No. 3, which followed, was so obviously modelled on Chopin that Yuri may be said to have established a Chopinian ambience.

What followed was as near miraculous as makes no matter. Anglo-Russian Oliver Poole, who is unbelievably (and visibly) but *twelve* years old, played a Study by Scriabin (like Liszt a musical descendant of Chopin) and then two Chopin studies. I closed my eyes and it could have been Yuri himself, not only in power and lightness of touch but also in emotional intensity. It was unbelievable: but it happened. The Chopin ambience continued.

What could follow? It was Bulgarian Lora Dimitrova to play Beethoven's Waldstein Sonata, a masterpiece I have cherished for seventy years. I have

never heard anything like it. Although the first movement was at breathtaking speed it lost none of its majesty and pathos. The second was transformed from a more prelude to the boisterous third into a lingering tragic lament, as Chopin himself must have played it. The prodigious last movement was prodigiously played. Lora Dimitrova left next day for a recital in Vienna. Lucky old Vienna!

Even so, the climax was yet to come. Forget Chopin. We know that Brahms and Rachmaninov in their Variations on Paganini's simple theme paid homage to him, but Polish Lutoslawski emphatically did not. He wrote the most impossibly brilliant and difficult variations for two pianos in a cool and witty modern style: and it was sheer delight. Who played? Oliver the boy, from memory, and Lora, the mature artist (with page-turning by Yuri himself), in incredible unity.

Chairman Terry Sutton and compere Nicholas Harby duly and properly thanked Dover Society and Town Council for their contributions. My tribute is also to Robert Poole and his wife Natalie, parents of Oliver, hosts to Yuri and friends to Lora. Robert plans to establish a Music Society in Dover embracing both professional musicians and local talent. He very much deserves to succeed and has all the requisite qualifications and connections.