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MUSIC REVIEW

Pianist's Recital Hits the Right Chords

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The Ohio State University School of Music certainly has cornered the market for contemporary music this season (if there ere such a thing as a market for contemporary music), what with its ongoing series on important works from the century just past and its recent new music festival.

The latter event, more splendid than usual, this year honored John Corigliano, who looked only slightly out of place Sunday winning a well-deserved Oscar for his score to the film *The Red Violin*.

The accent on novelty at OSU continued last night in Weigel Hall auditorium with a rich and often diverting piano recital by Donald Berman, a protégé of John Kirkpatrick who teaches at Tufts University. Perhaps the only events more uncommon than those featuring post-19th - century music around here these days are solo recitals.

For one evening, at least, the two rarities converged.

Berman's program covered the 20th century from early to late, from Charles Ives (1876-1954) to Kamran Ince (b. 1960), though it was interesting to be reminded how much of what came after him Ives already was experimenting with in the early decades. A commonality, one of the few, among the works selected was that many of the composers had a Roman

work was a throwaway. Each challenged not only the soloist but his audience, which may have felt a bit overwhelmed by the density of unfamiliar sounds.

It was, in short, a tough program.

With a recital of such magnitude and substance, a single short review must of necessity pick and choose its topics. This one will focus on the artist.

The quite astonishing conclusion one quickly came to last night, listening to and becoming instantly absorbed in Berman's performance, was that this was a great pianist with complete command not only of 20th century keyboard styles but with complete command of the music.

Few pianists delve into this repertoire to begin with. Berman not only has the technique, he has the intellect and the artistry to subdue the most unintelligible passages of Ives, on the one hand, and yet to turn around and weave magic from the compellingly elegant musings on Mozart by both Ince and Loren Rush. Much performance of contemporary music, like much past performance of pre-18th-century music, has suffered from an overriding emphasis on correctness at the expense of interpretation. Berman, however, wears the mantle of Kirkpatrick well.

Berman's genuinely awe-inspiring playing demonstrated the soul of both a virtuoso and

connection, either through study at the American Academy in Rome or by winning the Rome Prize in music.

Another uniting feature was that no

an artist, even when some of the music attended to last night might not really have been worthy of such mastery. He strives to serve the composer, no matter.

Contemporary piano music is lucky to have such a specialist.