

THE WASHINGTON POST

[Music](#)

Pianist David Kadouch delivers intelligent, imaginative recital

By Patrick Rucker December 7, 2014



French pianist **David Kadouch** played an **intelligent and imaginative recital** in the Meyer Concert Series at the Freer Gallery on Friday night. As a tie-in with “The Traveler’s Eye” exhibit, now on view through May 31 at the Sackler Gallery, Kadouch’s program, titled “The Traveler’s Ear,” centered on four Western composers inspired by travel.

First was Bach’s “Capriccio on the Departure of His Beloved Brother,” the composer’s farewell to his older brother, who left Germany for Sweden. Despite some extraneous accentuation in the earlier movements, **Kadouch’s lavishly embellished and sparsely pedaled interpretation captured the sense of a tender, heartfelt farewell.** Schumann’s evocative “Forest Scenes,” nine vignettes depicting an excursion in the woods, were **spirited and lyrical, with “Haunted Spot” and “The Prophet Bird” especially atmospheric.**

The heart of the concert was two very different works of Liszt. First came the “Weinen, Klagen Variations,” Liszt’s meditation on the bass line of one of Bach’s cantatas. **Kadouch easily negotiated the considerable technical challenges of this stark, philosophical work in a performance that was rich in contrasts.** After intermission came the “Petrarch Sonnets,” piano arrangements Liszt made of three of his early Italian songs. Though played expressively, their emotional intensity seemed held at arm’s length. **Kadouch’s interpretation of Bartok’s “Out of Doors” suite was immensely assured and perceptive, providing the perfect culmination of the evening.**

Kadouch is an intellectual pianist, one who seems to favor head over heart. His sound at the instrument, in this case a Boesendorfer concert grand, can be aggressive and occasionally dry. But his musical instincts are sound, and it will be interesting to observe how his career, already taking hold in Europe, will develop as he plays more in the United States.