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# JEAN-FRÉDÉRIC NEUBURGER, pianist

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### At 19, Pianist Has Polish, Personality

Neuburger Shines in Kennedy Center Recital

By TIM PAGE  
*Washington Post Staff Writer*

Jean-Frederic Neuburger's Sunday afternoon piano recital at the Kennedy Center Terrace Theater, sponsored by Young Concert Artists, was something pretty special, well worth negotiating the security hurdles that had been set up in preparation for the evening's Kennedy Center Honors.

This brilliantly polished, profoundly gifted young artist is the same age — 19 — that Mozart was when he completed his Sonata in G, K. 283, which began the program. Neuburger's playing was sweetly lyrical and intensely dramatic, yet nothing was taken to an extreme and the performance maintained the abiding sense of proportion that is the essence of great Mozart.

Chopin's Sonata in B Minor, Op. 58, was even better. Rather than concentrate only on the composer's luscious lead melodies, Neuburger found all sorts of contrapuntal variety in this music. The sonata thus became not merely a series of primary themes and subordinate accompaniments but a succession of deeply involved (and involving) kaleidoscopes of sound that enveloped the listener. And yet Neuburg-

er's musical expression was absolutely direct; the conveyance of grief in the desolate finale could not have been much more out-of-its-head cataclysmic.

Three "Moments Musicaux" by Rachmaninoff captured my favorite side of this composer — that is, his dark, brooding, Russian melancholy rather than the flash-bang tinsel he sometimes tosses out by the yard. Only the second of the three pieces was especially virtuosic in its demands, and such was the taste with which Neuburger played it that it seemed far more a musical than an athletic statement.

Ravel's "Gaspard de la Nuit" closed the program.

Washington loves standing ovations, and there are two kinds in this city: the grimly dutiful and the wildly enthusiastic. Neuburger received — and deserved — the latter, and rewarded the audience with two Chopin Etudes as a *gigniappe*.



Jean-Frederic Neuburger earned a standing ovation for his performance of works by Mozart, Chopin, Rachmaninoff and Ravel at the Terrace Theater.

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