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Young Concert Artists, Inc.

# Jean-Frédéric Neuburger, Pianist

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## *In Those Moments of Silence, Anticipation and a Little Edge*

Long before John Cage called listeners' attention to silence as a compositional element, composers of more mainstream tastes saw its dramatic potential. Performers

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don't always think of it quite so clearly: much of the time they treat rests as interruptions between bursts of timbre. But Jean-Frédéric Neuburger, a 19-year-old French pianist who made his New York debut as part of the Young Concert Artists series at Zankel Hall on Monday evening, used silence nearly as virtuosically as he used sound. In the Largo of Chopin's Sonata No. 3 in B minor, and in parts of Ravel's "Gaspard de la Nuit" — most notably in "Scarbo" — he stretched the composers' pauses just enough to draw an extra measure of tense expectation, but not so much as to seem exaggerated.



G. Paul Burnett/The New York Times  
Jean-Frédéric Neuburger in his New York debut at Zankel Hall.

Jean-Frédéric Neuburger  
Zankel Hall

Mr. Neuburger's interpretive instincts are his obvious selling point, but his technique is formidable as well. In Mozart's Sonata in G (K. 283), which opened the program, he produced a stylishly earthy sound and applied distinct textures and colors to different strands of the score, as if he were creating a cast of characters and presenting them in a lively dialogue. Throughout the piece — even in the more typically easygoing Andante — a pervasively restless current kept the work slightly on edge.

There was a touch of that in the Chopin as well, although here Mr. Neuburger broadened his palette. He reveled in the rippling textures of the outer movements but left space for poetry as well, and he accomplished the task of letting the music grow steamy while keeping it from becoming overwrought or melodramatic.

Two of Rachmaninoff's "Moments Musicaux" (Op. 16, Nos. 3 and 5) gave him an opportunity to show his persuasiveness in ruminative music, and his sharply accented account of the more torrential No. 4, played between them, seconded the impression he created in the Chopin.

Mr. Neuburger closed the program with an evocative performance of "Gaspard de la Nuit," in which "Ondine" sparkled; "Le Gibet" was played with a calm, macabre eeriness; and "Scarbo" was a study in demonic power and mystery.