McNulty Fortepiano Pleyel Shines at Bator Art Gallery: A Musical Tribute to Chopin

The Bator Art Gallery in Sopot, a charming seaside resort in Pomerelia on the southern coast of the Baltic Sea, hosted a remarkable event featuring the McNulty Fortepiano Pleyel. This instrument, crafted by Paul McNulty and Sergei Kramer (McNulty’s successor), was presented on stage in an exceptional performance by Naruhiko Kawaguchi and soprano Aldona Bartnik.

Naruhiko Kawaguchi, the winner of the 2nd prize in the 1st International Chopin Competition on Period Instruments, is a pianist dedicated to bringing to life the authentic sound of Chopin’s music. This competition emphasizes the importance of playing on historical instruments, giving musicians the chance to perform pieces on fortepianos from Chopin's era. Chopin himself once remarked that the Pleyel piano was his "non plus ultra," indicating that for him, no other piano could surpass its quality. It was on a Pleyel fortepiano that Chopin composed many of his works, and Liszt even described Chopin's playing as recreating the "lost art of the German water harmonica."

The McNulty Fortepiano Pleyel is based on Pleyel's op. 1619 from 1830, which Paul McNulty carefully reconstructed. This particular instrument comes from a private collection and replicates the rich sound Chopin adored. As a key figure in the fortepiano world, Paul McNulty has been at the forefront of crafting historically accurate instruments. His successor, Sergei Kramer, continues this legacy, ensuring that the artistry of fortepiano building remains alive and relevant.

During the event, Kawaguchi captivated the audience not only with his solo performance but also in collaboration with Aldona Bartnik. Bartnik, a soprano who specializes in historically informed performance, has studied at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague and is renowned for her exquisite interpretations of early and classical music. Together, they brought the composer's music to life in a historically accurate context, offering listeners a glimpse into how Chopin himself might have heard his works.

The McNulty Fortepiano Pleyel, brought to life by the hands of both McNulty and Kramer, is an important part of continuing the tradition of period performances.

This special performance at the Bator Art Gallery is just one of many that highlights the importance of using period instruments, such as the McNulty Fortepiano Pleyel, to revive and preserve the authenticity of 19th-century music. Whether you're a lover of Chopin, fortepianos, or simply appreciate the beauty of historically informed performances, the event in Sopot was an unforgettable celebration of music history.

In addition to the captivating performance by Naruhiko Kawaguchi and Aldona Bartnik, the event at Bator Art Gallery in Sopot was a momentous occasion for music enthusiasts. It shed light on the historical significance of fortepianos in bringing to life Chopin's unique soundscapes. The McNulty Fortepiano Pleyel, masterfully crafted by McNulty Fortepianos with the expertise of both Paul McNulty and his successor Sergei Kramer, mesmerized the audience with its authentic timbre. This instrument vividly conveyed the emotional nuances of Chopin’s music, just as the composer would have heard and imagined it on his preferred piano model.

This particular event not only celebrated the beauty of the fortepiano but also underscored the growing relevance of historically informed performances, which have been gaining momentum in concert circles worldwide. With younger generation musicians leading the performance, the evening showcased the timeless resonance of Chopin’s works. Set in the picturesque seaside resort of Sopot, this concert was as much a cultural event as it was a tribute to the legacy of Chopin’s music. McNulty Fortepianos’ craftsmanship, guided by both Paul McNulty and Sergei Kramer, continues to pave the way for a deeper understanding of how these period instruments shaped the music we cherish today.