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By Lonneke Regter

Prats is a glowing, virtuoso and supple pianist.

Cuban's poised performance of Ravel makes deep impression; he makes music straight from the heart. Dazzling dances, breathtaking glissandi: the words 'passion' and 'glow' could hardly describe the debut of Cuban Jorge Luis Prats in the Amsterdam Master Pianist series. It was Latin all the way through: the 52-year old Cuban swept the Main Hall with Brazilian and Spanish music, he then added a monumental piece of French piano literature and finally he highlighted music from his native country.

Prats' career so far has been remarkable. Over thirty years ago he won the Margu rite Long Piano Competition in Paris. Once back in Cuba, he didn't have the opportunity to break through in Europe and the United States. In 2008 at last, Prats seems to have paved the way to the international top.

It proved not to be difficult at all to go back in time. Prats performed Ravel's Gaspard de la Nuit with the greatest ease. The terribly difficult finale, the tricky Scarbo, won him the Ravel Prize in Paris many years ago. This time, his performance once again made a great impression, full of detail and controlled until the very last moment. During the first two parts Prats spun yarns of mysterious length. They lead fluently to the virtuoso finale. Such narrative lacked in the Granados cycle Goyescas. Here, Prats created a melancholy atmosphere and worked magic with his sophisticated use of the pedal. Sometimes it all seemed a bit long-winded, mainly due to Granados (1876-1916) with his regular alternation of musical depth and lounge music.

Prats reached for the limits of the dynamic range by alternating tempi in the enlivening 'modern' Tango by the Cuban Carlos Fari nas. Great dynamics were also successfully applied to Bachianas brasileiras no. 4 by Villa-Lobos. Prats excelled in Ravel's La Valse; he turned the piano into a dance orchestra and outlined the melodies in subtle colours. The choice of encores revealed Prats' love of dance music. He lived it up in warm-blooded Danzas Cubanas by Ignacio Cervantes. The Mazurka en glissando was impressive. The final tear-jerker Siempre en mi coraz n by Ernesto Lecuona was overall charming.

Conclusion: the original, straight-from-the-heart musician Prats has got 'it'. He knows how to capture an audience.

Something new for Prats and for the Master Pianist series: the recital can be (re)viewed on monterverdi.tv, a website for live streaming of classical concerts that was launched six months ago.

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