

The Fryderyk Chopin Society of Texas
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Review by Robert Ricklis, Ph.D.

On Tuesday, August 23, 2021, Fryderyk Chopin Society of Texas presented a very special concert at the Carpenter Hall of the Irving Arts Center.

The concert began with Jiana Peng, the first-prize winner of the 2020 International Chopin Piano Competition, Corpus Christi TX, performing an all-Chopin recital. She demonstrated superb technical skills, musicality and amazing connection with Chopin's musical spirit.

The beautiful voice of the soprano, Barbara Padilla, opened the second half with series of "Spiritual Songs" by Bach, Gounod, Schubert, Padilla and Binienda.

The pinnacle of the concert was Konrad Binienda's outstanding performance of Chopin's *Allegro de concert*. He brilliantly performed it with Irving Symphony Orchestra musicians conducted by Maestro Hector Guzman. Binienda, the first-prize winner of the 2017 International Chopin Piano Competition, Corpus Christi, TX, is a true piano virtuoso who displayed impressive technical prowess, beautiful tone and remarkable understanding of the piece.

Since Chopin's intention was to conceive this work as the first movement of his 3rd piano concerto, several composers, including Alexander Nicode, Kazimierz Wiłkomirski, Alan Kogosowski and Ingolf Wunder orchestrated this work. These orchestrations, influenced by the style of Brahms or Rachmaninoff, veer too far from Chopin's style. Binienda made his own, excellent version, written in Chopin's style of orchestration. He presented the world premiere with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of the orchestra's Permanent Associate Conductor, Maestro Grzegorz Nowak. The live CD from this riveting performance received accolades in reviews from London and Paris. We were fortunate to be part of the North American premiere. The audience rewarded this brilliant performance with long and well-deserved standing ovation.