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reviewer Michael Church

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The sin besetting most recitalists is not playing technically safe but playing safe in terms of repertoire: something Classical, something Romantic, something Contemporary - the choreography can simply be too neat. The dramatic potential of the recital, its capacity for taking the listener on a journey, is seldom realised.

But if the first half of Mark Bebbington's concert followed predictable lines, it was still interesting. Beginning with Haydn's late Sonata in C major H XV1:50 - written during the composer's Indian summer in London - Bebbington took us into the heart of Haydn's quizzical and endlessly surprising world. His touch was light and springy, and he brought out the implicitly symphonic quality of the piece, at one point letting harmonic congestion reign by holding down the sustaining pedal.

Moving into the valedictory atmosphere of Schubert's great Sonata in B flat major, he might have been playing a different instrument. Where every note of the Haydn had been in bold close-up, the opening of the Schubert seemed to speak to us from a distance, and with ineffable wistfulness.....

Then we were into uncharted waters, with the world premiere of a piece that the British composer John Ireland (1879-1962) had written 104 years ago and then suppressed, though without destroying the manuscript. Bebbington has made a speciality of recording early 20th-century British composers who in his view have been unjustly neglected, and Ireland's Rhapsody is his latest trouvaille. What's interesting is how close Ireland's pianistic thinking was to that of Rachmaninov, Debussy and Ravel, the last of whom he had not heard when he wrote this passionately virtuosic piece. It began as born-again Brahms, but it ended with its feet firmly planted in the 20th century, and if it ultimately added up to not very much, it was certainly worth airing.

Finally, Bebbington came into his own with three pieces by Liszt that released his particular brand of virtuosity. The dazzling way he delivered his second encore - Debussy's Feux d'artifice - would make a YouTube hit.