

KINGS PLACE

Federico Colli

Federico Colli is a favourite pianist among British music lovers and was a 2018 recipient of the UK Critics' Circle Music Awards. He opens this year's London Piano Festival with a dazzling programme.



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Tell us more about your concert at this year's London Piano Festival.

I will start my concert with a performance of three Scarlatti Sonatas. Scarlatti is a composer very close to my soul; not only because he is Italian but because he represents a big part of an ideal master for me. I dedicated my first album to Scarlatti, and my next album will also be dedicated to him.

Next, I will perform Beethoven's *Moonlight* Sonata and Bach-Busoni's Chaconne in D Minor which are very deep and famous works which everyone will know. There are many symbols behind these pieces of music which, when understood, make the music not simply beautiful but true.

Finally, I will give a performance of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. In this work, all the symbols from the first part of the programme become fundamental. It seems that this music represents every stage of life's journey through symbols in the music.

Which artists and/or composers or have been most influential on your career?

For me, Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli was the most important pianist in all of history. He was an Italian pianist, born in my city (Brescia) in 1920. I never met him, but he is a great mentor for me. Next year marks his 100th birthday, so will be a great year of celebrations of his work.

Composer-wise; all the classic period composers like Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. I love this period of classical music and I feel comfortable playing it.

Each year, I try to present a different work by Beethoven. I've studied a lot of Mozart and in a magic way it seems that he's helped me a lot in my career, for example, I won the Salzburg Mozart Competition in 2011. I studied Haydn when I was younger and, next season, I will perform Haydn's big E Flat Major Sonata.

What is your most memorable concert experience?

I have a wonderful memory of when I performed in the Royal Albert Hall with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, we performed Beethoven's Concerto No. 5. I was at the top of my game and was able to communicate with the audience and orchestra to the best of my ability. I felt really inspired to create something important on the stage.

I also have very fond memories of performing with the Mariinsky Orchestra led by Valery Gergiev in St Petersburg and with the BBC Symphony Orchestra led by Sakari Oramo at the Barbican in London. It is the goal of every artist to improve on each concert, and so I aim for my best concert experience to be my next one.

This is the first time you've performed at Kings Place, what are you most looking forward to?

For me, it is always exciting to discover a new hall; to discover the acoustics, the facilities, and the piano. To learn how the piano relates to the acoustics of the hall, to learn about the intimacy of performing on that stage, and to discover the magic relationship between the performer and the audience.

What advice would you give aspiring young pianists?

Study a lot; study the piano itself and study the culture. Try to open your mind to reading different things, from an aesthetic essay to a quantum mechanics book – be curious and discover as much as possible.

Your teacher is one of the most important features to help you create personality in your music, so choose a good one. Pick your teacher based on someone who works for you, instead of picking them based on an institution or an academy.

Believe in the power of music. Trust the music itself and follow every inspiration and idea you have because in music you can find everything. Be innovative and don't follow the fashion or some extravagant extra musical skills. Through this you will create something really important, beautiful and true.

What's next after the London Piano Festival?

On 16 September, I will perform Grieg Piano Concerto with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at Cadogan Hall and will then go on to Konzerthaus in Berlin where I will perform my debut recital.

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