

Adam György

By James Inverne

There's a strange but rather endearing story about the Hungarian pianist Adam György. When he was a young child, his parents noticed that he kept drawing things for them, but that his drawings would be upside down. So worried was his father that he even took young György to the doctor. Nothing could, it seemed, be done for the boy's unusual habit. Then one day the truth dawned on his father. As he sat opposite his son and asked him to draw him a house, and György drew his house upside down as usual, his father realised: he was drawing it upside down so that his father could see it the right way up. And that's how György plays – for the audience. The music isn't played for himself, it is given as a gift.

He was playing piano aged four, not long after he started drawing. His talent was soon noticed and he joined the Bela Bartok Conservatory in 1994, striking up a mutually devoted professional relationship with his teacher Katalin Halmagyi. Six years later György progressed to the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest. It was in Budapest that year that he won all three available prizes at the first International Chopin Piano Competition – the latest additions to a bulging trophy shelf that includes the Vienna Classics Prize and the special prize at the San Remo International Piano Competition. A year on from his Budapest triumph, in 2005, he became a Steinway artist.

In his mid-twenties, György is well-placed to make his mark on the music world. The Carnegie Hall in New York, Chopin's own house in Poland, even an extensive tour of the Far East, these are all already on his recital calendar. CNN have featured him as a rising star in a special report. But he is not abandoning his studies to ride the whirlwind; he remains at the Franz Liszt Academy, working for his doctorate. Concerts must fit in around that.

Even at such a comparatively early stage in his career, Adam György has built up a formidable discography. He has five recordings already under his belt, including "Adam György Plays



The Piano" (released in 2006, and featuring works ranging from Bach to Prokofiev), and "Concert In Budapest" (Chopin, Liszt and Marzuki). It seems that he, or his management, have also learned the tricks of sponsorship. Browse his website and the sponsors list features a clutch of companies, not excluding Steinway. Quite a vote of confidence from the leading piano-maker.

And, alongside his distinguished teachers (one of whom, György Nador, calls him "A born talent"), Adam has a strong support team. His father and brother work with him, in a relationship which they all say works along the lines of professionalism and admiration. As CNN reported, "He is called as a PR gimmick "The unknown pianist." However marketable, it's not a title that he will be able, one suspects, to use convincingly for very much longer.

