

The New Criterion

Music

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Concert note

by [Ben Finane](#)

On Alfred Brendel at Carnegie Hall.

Alfred Brendel, piano
Carnegie Hall, New York.
February 20, 2008

A renowned interpreter of Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert, the Austrian pianist Alfred Brendel played works by all three in what was billed as his last New York recital, part of a season of lasts that will bring Brendel's sixty years of public performance to an end.

Brendel, now seventy-seven, could have been mistaken for a much younger man. With a bounce in his (dignified) step each time he came on stage, including three encores and countless curtain calls, he showed no sign of fatigue at the keyboard. His opening piece was delightful, surprising, and perhaps the performance of the night: Haydn's Variations in F minor, Hob. XVII:6. No sooner was the pianist seated than he launched decisively into the theme. Singing lightly to himself, he also took care to bring out voicings in the variation ...

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Ben Finane is the author of a forthcoming book on Handel's *Messiah*.

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