**CONCERTS IN THE WEST - 2015**

June 4, 5 and 6 in Hatherleigh, Bridport, Ilminster and Lyme Regis

Alexander Ullman *piano*

‘Concerts in the West’ has, over the ten years of its existence, succeeded in attracting outstanding musicians – but, for some, none have affected us as physical beings in quite the way this young British pianist did. Sometimes the music simply hurt! The choice of pieces, once he had beautifully articulated Bach’s C sharp major Prelude and Fugue from Book 2 and Beethoven’s early Sonata in F major Op 10 No 2, followed by the deliciously poised set of variations that make up Tchaikovsky’s Op 19 No 6, was meant to impress.

Alexander has already shone at the Purcell School and then the Curtis Institute, Philadelphia at the invitation of Leon Fleisher, one of the great piano teachers of the twentieth century. Even at 24 years of age Alex has already won many prizes, most notably First Prize at the International Competition in Memoriam Ferenc Liszt. Indeed, he included Liszt’s Paganini Etude in A minor as the last of a trio of studies to bring the first half of the evening to a shattering close.

The 2014/15 season found Alex touring the East as well as Italy and the US while in the second half of the current year will again experience international piano competitions, heralded very soon by the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow. We wish him every success!

In the second half of the recital we were taken into the world of Debussy where through the three movements of his *Estampes* we glimpsed the orient; from Spain, evocations of the Alhambra, and in Normandy, Debussy’s musical representation of gardens in the rain – *Jardins sous la pluie.*

If you thought you were exhausted by the choice of music thus far, you had not reckoned with the final work in the programme, Stravinsky’s *Trois mouvements from Pétroushka.*  Few works for orchestra transcribe as well as this for solo piano and, as you can imagine, Alexander Ullman did not miss an opportunity to demonstrate his virtuosity.