

Mozart's musical joke makes a lively concert

By JOANNE K. PSENKA

Fast-paced musical fun at the Nightcap with Mozart stimulated Friday's concert-goers.

Impressario Misha Rachlevsky and I-Fu Wang in violin duet created a vigorously young sound—a very swift sound.

On Friday the Nightcap musicians will be John Snow, oboe, David Saltzman, cello, Wang and Rachlevsky. Concerts, which are held at Birmingham Unitarian Church, begin with refreshments at 11 p.m.

Wang explained that in rehearsal with Rachlevsky for last week's show, it was their aim to play as quickly as possible while maintaining the correct notes and observing the flavor and correct nuance of the music. The effect was dynamic.

This music has an appealing sense of the necessity.

IT IS REMARKABLE that the intent to play with such integration, one violinist with the other, could succeed. The performers have been playing together only briefly — a couple of months at the most. Wang described the combination as "compatible."

"It is a dialogue," he said. "It is our way of communicating with each other and with the people in the audience."

He comes originally from Taiwan. He studied music at Curtis and played in Philadelphia before joining the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Wang met Rachlevsky here and the result was musical magic.

Friday's audience was larger than usual — more laughter and more chatter. The violinists were detained by another musical engagement the same evening. When they arrived for the Nightcap Concert, whistles greeted them. With aplomb Rachlevsky quoted from Stanislavski — master of the stage — an ironic wisdom, setting the stage for sheer entertainment.

The Telemann Sonata in F-Major was masterfully played. It was swift and enjoyable. The opening allegro was arranged so that the score Rachlevsky played seemed to lead, then hide, and the phrases Wang played seemed to follow — like a sophisticated game of tag.

Rachlevsky led in the fugue by playing the statement. Wang announced the first response and Rachlevsky took the second response. The melodic motif varied a three-note trio in a light-hearted way.

The large began in a different mood. The violinists shifted technique to interpret the wistful, expansively long phrases. Long phrases test the violinist's skill in bowing. Rachlevsky and Wang are masterful violinists — they managed good continuity.

The Telemann vivace movement has a distinct character of swift playfulness. The music made zig-zag progress stepwise. The melody seemed to overlap—an embellishment intended by the composer and written into the score. The mezzoforte intended loudness was maintained very well, as were the repetitions. This was a fine sound.

THE BOCCERINI DUET in E-Major was a favorite of the audience. This moderately fast piece of music offers performance versatility to virtuosos performers. It has a flamboyant quality — with the effect of a multitude of different voices in gay chorus.

In the Larghetto, a significant sound is created by rippling scales. These were deftly performed.

The bowing of the second intervals (two-note chords) produced an intimate, very warm effect. The minuetto gave the soft, lyrical presence of a sense of bitterness longing. The variations on the theme were swifter. The timing was good.

The rondo swept into some unusual effects. The musicians maintained a tension between seeming graceful and dramatic. There is much contrary motion in the score. That the performers were well-matched was proven in the vigorous playing of this rondo.

At mid-program, the climax of the evening, Mozart's "The Table Music," found Rachlevsky and Wang bending

over a single score on the table between them. One of them had to be reading the music upside-down and backwards. Mozart in his day pleased audiences with this curious piece and Nightcap listeners were also charmed by the playful, buoyant melodies.

In the Mozart allegro, the score calls for strange parallels — thirds in unison. They are striking. In the Largo, the device of octaves lends a folksy quality.

The allegro contains difficult passages. There was a two-note repetition. The concluding allegretto built an effective crescendo. The statement of the theme was mezzoforte and the response was pianissimo faint echo. The finale was very brief. There was no coda.

The program digressed into a gypsy realm with the atonal brilliance of Bartok (an audience request) and sublime modernity of Wieniawsky. The same wealth of folklore in Eastern Europe was interpreted differently by both composers. Bartok's Five Short Duets were tantalizingly brief. The Wieniawsky Two Caprices were soothing and soulful.



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