

Violinist shows strengths in Tartini's work

The American Chamber Orchestra recital series recently presented one of its most attractive programs in Varner Hall, Oakland University.

The participating artists were violinist Dmitry Sitkovetsky and pianist Jacqueline Schmitt. The program focused on the violin, which had a significantly more prominent role. Sitkovetsky, who has distinguished himself in his native Russia since an early age, has rubbed shoulders with the legendary violin masters in that country. Being the son of the noted pianist, Bella Davidovich, his choice of the violin as his instrument goes a long way toward establishing him as a musician who is independently recognized.

The program consisted of works by Tartini, Bach, Janacek, Prokofiev and Rimsky-Korsakov.

TARTINI'S "DEVIL'S TRILL" Sonata is possibly the work most responsible for putting Tartini "on the map." As the title indicates, it is fiendishly difficult. Its challenges peak in the final movement. While many violinists attempt this work, Sitkovetsky proved to be among the few who could play it successfully.

Bach's Chaconne from his violin partita in D minor is one of the most significant landmarks of the violin repertoire. The independent prominence of this movement is at the expense of the rest of the partita, which is seldom heard in its entirety. Beyond the high technical demands of this piece, the awareness of Bach's style and structure and their proper realization pose an added challenge that few can meet successfully.



Avigdor Zaromp

Sitkovetsky seemed to be aware of these aspects for most part. At times, however, the contrapuntal nature of the passages was under-emphasized, especially in some of the earlier variations. Overall, however, he gets high marks for this performance.

The second portion of this program featured one original work and two arrangements. The piano and violin sonata by Janacek is one of

those seldom-heard little gems. The mysterious, haunting themes were effective and convincing.

Among the arrangements, the four pieces from Prokofiev's "Cinderella" were the better ones. In my opinion, while the ballet is scored for orchestra, this arrangement by Fltshengols, a composer on the faculty of the Moscow Conservatory, captured much of texture of these movements.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV'S "Le Coq

Tartini's "Devil's Trill" Sonata is possibly the work most responsible for putting Tartini "on the map."

d'or," on the other hand, is best left with the original orchestration. This arrangement by Zimballist, while highlighting the violin in a virtuosic role, fails to do justice to the music.

Jacqueline Schmitt is a very capable pianist, whose role was overshadowed by the violin in this program. This was the major drawback of the concert. A capable violinist such as Sitkovetsky shouldn't feel threatened by a more prominent piano role. A solid work for violin and piano, such

as a Brahms or Beethoven sonata, would have been preferable to the arrangements, especially the last one.

More violin and piano music will be featured at the same place on March 1. On the program will be works by Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann and Brahms, performed by pianist Constantine Orbelian and violinist Misha Rachlevsky. Rachlevsky is, of course, the founder and director of the New American Chamber Orchestra.

Piano, cello program exciting

By Avigdor Zaromp
special writer

The Lyric Chamber Ensemble, LCE, recently presented another excellent program at the Edsel Ford House. The event featured pianist Fedora Horowitz and cellist Marcy Chantaux. Horowitz is the founder and artistic director of LCE and her tireless efforts result in some of the most exciting chamber music in this area. Chantaux, assistant principal cellist for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, appears regularly in area music programs.

In this latest program, excellent music making was given to works that are seldom heard. The two principal selections on the program were the sonatas for piano and cello by Richard Strauss and Rachmaninoff. Sandwiched in between was the sonata for unaccompanied cello by the contemporary American composer George Crumb.

The piano-cello combination is second only to the piano-violin in terms of repertoire. The special effect of these two instruments has been recognized by many masters and it was understood and fully realized here.

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THE STRAUSS SONATA is the musically weaker of the two. This early work was written before the individual style of the composer was fully developed and the obvious influence of other composers makes this work highly derivative, two reasons this work is so seldom performed.

However, the conscientious and shining performance on this occasion demonstrated a good reason for including in the repertoire. The romantic mixture of styles in this sonata is nevertheless of the highest quality.

The Rachmaninoff Sonata in C Minor, written in 1901, is representative of the composer's style that is manifested in later works. For those familiar with his second and third piano concertos, this work creates a sense of "deja vu."

The tender expressiveness of the

cello with the lavish pianistic harmonies results in a mixture that transcends the two instruments. In addition to the musical challenges, the work also presents high technical demands. The performers convincingly conquered both aspects. There was good communication and coordination even in the most rhythmically awkward passages.

Listening to this sonata under such a moving performance gives the listener a broader understanding of Rachmaninoff's style, which is normally pianistically oriented but whose singing themes are so much enhanced by the cello strokes in this work.

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