

## Laplan -Seiler-Carr Trio rises to occasion, with help from N.Y. pianist Yael Weiss

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**KENNETH DELONG, CALGARY HERALD** Updated: November 4, 2019

For its second concert of the season, The Calgary Pro Musica Society offered a program that featured two of the most popular works in the piano trio repertoire: Beethoven's "Archduke" Trio and Ravel's only piano trio, the Trio in A minor.

On hand to perform these two great works at Eckhardt-Gramatt  Hall on Sunday was the Laplan -Seiler-Carr Trio; only because of illness pianist Andr  Laplante was replaced by New York pianist Yael Weiss. While it was disappointing not to be able to hear Laplante, one of Canada's most interesting pianists, his shoes were more than capably filled by Weiss.

Appearing a couple of years ago with her own trio, Weiss is an experienced chamber musician and performed memorably when she was here. It is a testament to all three performers that, with only one day of rehearsal, all three were able to produce as polished and convincing as this recital.

Sometimes one tends to take for granted the level of professionalism displayed by established artists. Weiss had not performed these particular works—both of them tremendously demanding—in more than a year (I have my spies!). But one could never have guessed it from the authority and freedom of her playing.

Missing hardly a note into nearly two hours of demanding performance, Weiss fitted into the existing ensemble

with remarkable aplomb. Perhaps the only sense one might have had of a performance put together at the last minute was a small measure of carefulness, evident more in the Beethoven than in the Ravel.

The Ravel trio is the far more virtuosic and more obviously difficult work to play of the two, at least for the pianist. But in this instance it was the more vivid and exciting performance. Part of this, I think, is that the strongly colouristic element in writing needs all the performers to have a hyper-sensitivity to the the actual sound being made: its delicacy, its refinement, its taste. This demand actually served to bring the players more strongly into a unified artistic space where the unique speech of Ravel's music emerged beautifully.

The rapt opening, with its high octave string writing and hushed piano chords, was wonderfully achieved, a very hard things to actually make happen in live performance. And the playful second movement was as quicksilver as one could want, a movement that is tremendously demanding on the players' technique, even as it has to appear effortless. This was a high point of the evening. The energy and drive of

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the final movement built to a tremendous climax, with the demanding trills in the strings and virtuoso swirls from the piano.

The Beethoven trio was nearly as good, if perhaps a trifle level in its effect compared to the Ravel. But nothing was amiss: the broad opening lines of the great opening melody were eloquently delivered, with sensitive commentary by the strings. The frisky scherzo was followed by one of Beethoven's finest variation sets, the string tone rich and expressive.

The finale of this trio is one of the most genial of all movements in Beethoven, music that all good ensemble take to their hearts—as was the case here. Both of the string players are thorough professionals who have long since mastered these works. Unlike the Calidore Quartet performance heard recently, this was much more outward playing, the sound level higher, the sense of individual virtuosity more obviously evident. I have always liked piano trios with a prominent violin line, and this was fully the case in Mayumi Seiler's playing, always generous in tone and she was quick to take the lead when the music calls for it.

Colin Carr has made an enviable reputation as a rock solid cellist, a performer of evident disciplined classical training and able to make the instrument sing, as it must, in these two great works of the chamber music repertoire.

Despite the quick change of pianist, all performers rose to the occasion, and the concert was evidently much enjoyed by the warm response it received by the large audience, a response well

deserved by the fine quality of the performance.

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