

Georgian Music Review - Mendelssohn and Hummel Sunday October 6th



Submitted by Juhan Puhm - Juhan Puhm is a local composer, performer, teacher, piper and member of the Celtic band Pagan's Folly.

On a lovely fall afternoon many came out to hear a wonderful concert of chamber music. Georgian Music remarkably celebrates its 30th anniversary this season. The sanctuary at Bethel Community Church, with its wonderfully constructed stage and magnificent Shigeru piano doubles as a warm and intimate place to hear chamber music.

It is hard to imagine three more accomplished young women. The concert opened with Franz Schubert's Arpeggione Sonata in A minor, composed in 1824 when Schubert was 27, probably roughly around the same age as our three performers. Schubert's sonata, originally for a large bowed guitar-type instrument, has been arranged for many different instruments accompanied by piano. Today we heard an arrangement for flute and piano, played by the Estonian flautist (and fellow country-person to myself) Kaili Maimets. The flute sounded natural and clear without a single breathy note. Kaili played beautifully throughout.

The second piece in the first half was Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy's Cello Sonata No. 2, Op. 58. As clear as the flute sounded in the first piece, the cello of Rachel Mercer sounded pure and full without a scratched or rough tone. Mendelssohn wrote this sonata for himself and his brother Paul. Without a doubt, Mendelssohn was a highly virtuosic and accomplished pianist.

This brings us to our third performer, Angela Park on piano. For every note played by the flautist or cellist, Ms. Park must have played about 30 notes. It is hard to over state how accomplished, intricate and effortless her playing was. Of the four large scale German pieces on the program, mostly written in the 1830's and 1840's, there was not a moment for her fingers to rest. In one sense, this was really a piano concert with flute and cello invited along for the ride.

The second half saw all three performers come together. The first piece was Johann Hummel's Trio for Flute, Cello and Piano Op. 78. Hummel along with Mendelssohn and Schubert was also a virtuoso pianist, so much so that every once in a while the flute and cello were silent for a few bars while the piano played on.

The last work on the program was Mendelssohn's Piano Trio No. 1, Op. 49 with the flute arranged from the original violin part. All three performers played innately and naturally together, connected by the music. Through four movements the performers worked towards an exciting finale marked *Allegro assai appassionato*. Again, the pianist deftly wove an endless stream of notes.

If I would have one criticism, not of the performers but of the compositions, through more than an hour and a half of music there were barely a few bars where the flute or cello were heard alone and unaccompanied by the piano.

Following the last notes, the audience rose to their feet and the amazing performers were presented with beautiful bouquets of flowers as lovely and wonderful as their playing.