

North Shore Chamber Festival delivers memorable Schubert and Weber



Clarinetist Ilya Shterenberg performed Weber's Clarinet Quintet Friday night at the North Shore Chamber Music Festival in Northbrook.

Friday night's performance at the North Shore Chamber Music Festival was an evening of true chamber music with the players making music with one another and eagerly sharing it with the audience.

Artistic director and world-renowned violinist, Vadim Gluzman, briefly and compassionately introduced the first piece on Friday evening's program: Arvo Pärt's *Mozart-Adagio*.

Pärt composed this work for trio in 1992 in memory of violinist Oleg Kagan, a close friend who had passed away. Kagan was a Mozart specialist, and, with great imagination and brilliance, the Estonian composer mined the second movement of Mozart's early Sonata in F major, K.280. By maintaining Mozart's lyrical soul and surrounding it with his own pensive sound world, the result is intensely solemn and moving.

Gluzman performed the piece with pianist Angela Yoffe and cellist Mark Kosower. Their interpretation was spellbinding with careful phrasing and perfect intonation. As with many Pärt works, he uses pauses as a musical idea and the trio treated the silences with great concentration with the Village Presbyterian Church proving to be the ideal acoustic for this effect.

The next piece on the program offered a stark contrast with Carl Maria von Weber's buoyant and energetic Quintet for Clarinet and Strings. Composed in 1815 for Heinrich Bärmann, a close friend for whom Weber had also written his clarinet concertos, the

Quintet is likewise more of a concerto than a chamber piece, requiring agile virtuosity and using about every note in the instrument's range.

Ilya Shterenberg's performance was truly outstanding, played with a crystal-clear tone and commanding musicianship, the clarinetist navigating the instrument with fluency. There was a particular memorable moment in the second movement where he launched the instrument in multi-octave chromatic scales in succession — first at a powerful *ff*, then at a graceful *ppp* — entering as though out of the mist.

The string quartet members were violinists Ilya Kaler and Lisa Shihoten, violist Rose Armbrust, and cellist Ani Aznavoorian. Together, these five musicians performed with great ensemble, always in proper balance and in clear communication.

The highlight of the evening was the program's final work, Franz Schubert's masterpiece, the 'Trout' Quintet for piano quartet and double bass. Schubert composed it in 1822 when he was a mere 22 years of age. It is popularly referred to as the 'Trout' because the fourth movement is a theme and variations on his song *Die Forelle* (The Trout).

The quintet was pianist William Wolfram, violinist Gluzman, violist Atar Arad, cellist Kosower, and bass Timothy Cobb. The ensemble performed with incredible sensitivity, anchored by their ability to listen to one another. Much of the piece is very delicate and the quintet handled these passages as though they were passing around a crystal ball. They never lost control through the exchange of melody, quick and fleeting accompaniments, and moments of unison. The rich chords were accentuated with the addition of the double bass, and Cobb never overpowered his colleagues.

The festival concludes 7:30 p.m. Saturday with music of Bartok, Brahms, Daugherty and Oscar Peterson. nscmf.org

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