



Peninsula Reviews

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Gryphon Trio Triumphs!

by Lyn Bronson

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It is always a pleasure to hear the splendidly exuberant and accomplished musicians of the Gryphon Trio — pianist Jamie Parker, violinist Annalee Patipatanakoon and cellist Roman Borys. The occasion last night, was the first of the Carmel Music Society's presentations in its Mozart Series. Having this concert in All Saints' Church, the most exciting acoustical space on the Monterey Peninsula, provided a special enhancement. Although we were sitting in the midst of a large audience, the superb acoustics allowed the music to envelop us from all directions and provided the intimate ambiance of a private concert held in a home.

The program chosen by members of the trio might well have suited a lecture recital on the development of the piano trio. Haydn's Trio in A Major, Hob. XV/18 has its antecedents in the earlier trio sonata, where the cello served merely as a continuo part duplicating the keyboard's bass line. Although Haydn occasionally allows the string parts more than a few interesting moments, this trio remains dominated by the piano part throughout. Accordingly, it was a delight to observe pianist Parker zipping through lots of snappy passages in the first movement, emoting and charming us in some pensive haunting melodies in the second movement, and then to observe him wind it all up with some impressively controlled virtuosity in the quirky and humorous finale.

Before the following Beethoven Trio in B-flat Major, Op. 11 (a work often performed with the clarinet replaying the violin) pianist Jamie Parker addressed the audience and talked briefly about Beethoven's treatment of the violin and cello as more equal partners in this trio as an example of how the piano trio as a genre was rapidly developing. *Quod erat demonstrandum* — throughout this work, we heard delicious repartee between the instruments, and cellist Roman Borys had a full blown romantic solo (soon echoed in the violin) in the gorgeous slow movement. The crown jewel in this Trio is, of course, the light hearted last movement Theme & Variations that gave everybody in every possible configuration a chance to show off Beethoven's clever melodic and rhythmic inventions.

The evening's concert concluded with Mendelssohn's less often performed Piano Trio No. 2 in C Minor. As an example of how far the piano trio had come in fifty years, there couldn't have been a better choice. Torrid romantic outbursts coupled with rampant virtuosity from the three musicians (especially for the pianist who Mendelssohn has blasting away in his own little private piano concerto), this trio makes a powerful effect, which was enhanced enormously by the fabulous playing of the Gryphon trio. The extraordinary playing we heard in the Scherzo movement and the in the Finale brought the audience to its feet in a wild outburst of enthusiastic approval.

As is its custom, the Carmel Music Society invited the audience to a lavish reception after the concert to meet the musicians.