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May 15, 2023



## ESPRESSIVO! piano quartet

Anna Polonsky, piano - Jaime Laredo, violin - Milena Pajaro-von de Stadt, viola - Sharon Robinson, cello

**Linton Chamber Music series, April 24:** Besides the piano trio literature, piano quartets are among my favorite genres. So, I couldn't wait to hear the debut of a new ensemble at the Linton Music Series, the **Espressivo! Piano Quartet**.

Its anchors are the indefatigable Jaime Laredo (violin) and Sharon Robinson (cello), who also serve as co-artistic directors. Rounding out the quartet are pianist Anna Polonsky and violist Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt, both superb artists.

In the wake the death of the esteemed pianist **Joseph Kalichstein**, who died in March 2022 at age 76, Laredo and Robinson did not want to revisit the piano trio literature that they shared for decades with their extraordinary pianist, "Yossi." I'm so glad that they have decided to explore the quartets. The "Encore" concert I heard at Congregation Beth Adam was deeply rewarding.

The program opened with "Morpheus" for viola and piano by Rebecca Clarke. It was a gorgeous, Impressionistic work by the British composer (1886-1979). Apparently when it premiered in New York, Clarke used a male pseudonym so the critics might review it favorably (they did). **Polonsky's piano sparkled, and Pajaro-van de Stadt played with expressive beauty.**

It was a rare treat to hear Fauré's Piano Quartet No. 1 in C Minor. **This was a ravishing performance by the ensemble.** The piano was lush and supportive, and the strings glowed. To finish, Brahms' Piano Quartet No. 2 in A Major had both breadth and power, and **the well-matched ensemble breathed together.** The piece was somewhat moody until the red-blooded finale. **They played the coda exuberantly and listeners were on their feet. More piano quartets from this group soon, please!**

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