

South Florida Classical Review

KLR Trio serves up thrilling Brahms and a Florida premiere

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It's a testament to the star power of the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio that on an absolutely perfect Miami night – a Monday night, no less – they were able to draw a healthy crowd to Florida International University's Wertheim Performing Arts Center for a Friends of Chamber Music of Miami concert of Brahms, Silverman, and Mozart.

The KLR Trio's members, Joseph Kalichstein, piano, Jaime Laredo, violin, and Sharon Robinson, cello, have performed together since 1977, and **they brought a sumptuous maturity to the program that few other trios can match.**

This was evident from the opening measures of Mozart's Piano Trio No. 2 in B flat, K. 502, as the Trio took a lush, if interpretively restrained approach to Mozart's capricious themes. Like slipping on a well-worn shoe, **they traded lines and voicings masterfully, and the communication among them was obvious and effortless.** Entrances and exits were flawlessly executed, and there were no rough edges anywhere. Kalichstein's sparkling, rounded piano tone contributed to a softer rendering that sometimes bordered on romanticism, with lyrical lines occasionally stretched to the limit in the Larghetto. The Allegretto had some of the playful spirit one expects in Mozart, and the **trios's impeccable voicing was spot-on** in the development section, where Mozart's dynamic extremes create a treacherous dialogue between the three instruments.

The Mozart was followed by a new work by Stanley Silverman, a composer who has ties to classical modern composition and the popular and Broadway worlds. His Trio no. 2 "Reveille" was commissioned to honor a family friend and arts patron, Herman Sandler, who died in the World Trade Center on September 11. However, the work is cast more as a celebration of Sandler's life than the tragedy of his death.

Silverman draws upon numerous musical influences to create a loving, if lengthy and somewhat schizophrenic, tribute to his friend. In this seven-movement trio, we find references to Bach, Thomas Morley, Pierre Boulez, Elliott Carter, Cuban guajiro, Maurice Ravel, and a very long set of variations on Paul Simon's *You Can Call Me Al*. But the centerpiece of the work is essentially a folk song lament based on Shakespeare's *Fear No More the Heat O' the Sun*, sung in the play for a dead king. At the premiere, this lute song was sung by Sting, but Monday night in Miami the instrumental version was performed by Robinson, who delivered a richly warm tone, occasionally taken up by Laredo, over gorgeous harmonic changes. Still, one couldn't help wondering what it would sound like with Sting in the house.

If the trio was a bit restrained in the Mozart, they brought it all for Brahms' Piano Quartet in G minor, Op. 25. For this performance, the trio was joined by violist *Michael Tree, a founding member of the Guarneri Quartet, who blended so completely he could have been a regular KLR member.*

After the delicate opening of the Allegro, the performers quickly gave way to the **impassioned, thunderous playing** one hopes to hear in Brahms. This was **thrilling ensemble work, with seamless shaping and trading of lines**. Nowhere was this on greater display than the Intermezzo movement, with its agitated pulse beautifully maintained throughout the ensemble, most notably by Robinson, as Laredo and Tree's melodies wafted above. Kalichstein's gentle, effortless piano simply glided throughout, coming to the fore in his majestic playing of the noble piano episode in the Andante con moto.

The Rondo alla Zingarese sealed the performance, with its Hungarian gypsy-influenced melodies and rhythmic drive. **The four musicians were on fire, beginning with a blistering tempo that only got faster as the work went on. The stunning passagework by each of the players, and the superb balance made for a nearly perfect performance and a rousing end to a memorable evening of chamber music.**