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Newport Music Festival: Review Beethoven's right at home at The Elms

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By Sandra Matuschka | The Newport Daily News | 0 comments



Jacqueline Marque | Staff photos

NEWPORT, R.I. — The packed audience at The Elms was treated to a smorgasbord of musical goodies Tuesday morning at the Newport Music Festival's "Beethoveniad." You didn't need to know composer Ludvig van Beethoven's music to fall in love with the brilliant presentations, and if you did know it, you fell in love all over again.

The morning opened with the Piano Trio in E-flat Major, Op. 1, No. 1 — a long name for a deliciously performed piece featuring festival favorites Grigorios Zamparas at the piano, Eugen Tzikindelean on violin and Sergey Antonov on cello. The three musicians were on spot and in sync playing the sparkling and exuberant allegro. The sweetness of the adagio's second movement was accented by being able to hear the individual instruments so clearly; the dulcet sounds of violin and cello were greatly complemented by the piano work.

The intimacy of the setting and acoustics allowed the listener to appreciate a Beethoven that can be lost in the larger orchestral works. In The Elms' setting, the sweetness of notes can be savored in a whole new way. The up-tempo scherzo provided a solid musical stairway into the lively rhythms of the concluding movement, combining to provide a riveting cohesive performance with a bang-up ending.

Accompanied by Alain Jacquon at the piano, Eric Ruske exercised the French horn, giving Beethoven's Horn Sonata in F Major, Op. 17 a workout worthy of the master. The allegro was as cheerful as its name, played with vigor and gusto. The clarion horn took center stage without overwhelming the piano, and the adagio was languid without being slow. Ruske's breath control and modulation, along with his musical fluidity, made for

Violist Eugene Tzikindelean, pianist Grigorios Zamparas and cellist Sergey Antonov perform during the Newport Music Festival's 'Beethoveniad' concert Tuesday morning at The Elms in Newport.



Also

- The 46th Newport Music Festival will run through Sunday, July 27 at various times at various venues in Newport, Bristol and Warwick. Ticket prices vary. For more information, call 849-0700 or visit www.newportmusic.org.
- To read a preview of the festival, which opened July 11, go to www.NewportDailyNews.com and click on '46th festival takes it up a notch.'



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seamless playing on an instrument not often accorded the spotlight.

The Violin Sonata No. 3 in E-Flat major, Op. 12 led into the second half of the program, with Corinne Chapelle's vibrant violin playing enhanced by the piano work of Kevin Fitz-Gerald at the piano. With a prepossessing talent and stage presence, Chapelle leaned into and moved with the various tempos of the work. She attacked the violin with virtuosity and energy, even as her piano partner matched her vivaciousness in his accompaniment.

Chapelle handled the quieter passages with as much feeling as she had shown earlier in the more lively sections of the sonata; the combination of her musicianship and her personality served to bring the work alive. No longer were there flat notes on a page, but a living, breathing musical work. The adagio in particular had a fulsome sweetness with a clear rich tonality to it that combined to provide both lightness and richness to the piece. Her ability to go from strident staccato to soft and gentle bow strokes in a split instant was exciting both to watch and to hear.

Hungarian pianist Gergely Boganyi's passionate piano playing rounded out the morning's performances with two piano sonatas that brought down the house. It's difficult to describe his piano playing without heaping on superlatives. Beginning with the Piano Sonata No. 8 in C Minor, Op.13 (known as the "Pathetique"), Boganyi's thunderous chords alerted the audience that something special was afoot. In his hands, the piano became a living, pulsing entity; it was not being played — it was playing. Notes tumbled over one another in abandon in the sometimes somber, sometimes energetic first movement.

In the familiar adagio of the second movement, notes were caressed and coaxed forth in the silence like budding flowers. Boganyi entered deeply into the work at hand, and in the concluding movement of the piece, his perfectly executed trills, cadenzas and runs were magical. The audience cheered and spontaneously rose in a standing ovation.

Boganyi concluded the concert with The Piano Sonata No. 14 in C Sharp Minor, Op. 27, No. 2 (known as the "Moonlight Sonata"). The softly undulating strains of the familiar sonata spread into the audience like a calming agent for the excitement of the first piece, its soothing notes reflecting so perfectly the moon's shimmering light on still waters.

The allegretto lifted the enchanting veil of peace as a slightly more up-tempo cadence began. The ante was upped in the agitated presto of the third movement, which royally concluded in a burst of energetic piano fireworks that brought the audience to its feet.

Boganyi seemed to play with his whole body and soul; the phrase "throws himself into his work" comes to mind. He seemed to wring notes out of the keys that weren't there before, and is so fully absorbed in the music — in the pouring forth of the music — that he is oblivious to everything else.

If you've been fortunate enough to experience Boganyi performing a work, you've been served a supreme musical feast. The audience apparently thought so too, because it insisted on his returning three times to the stage to acknowledge a roaring standing ovation.

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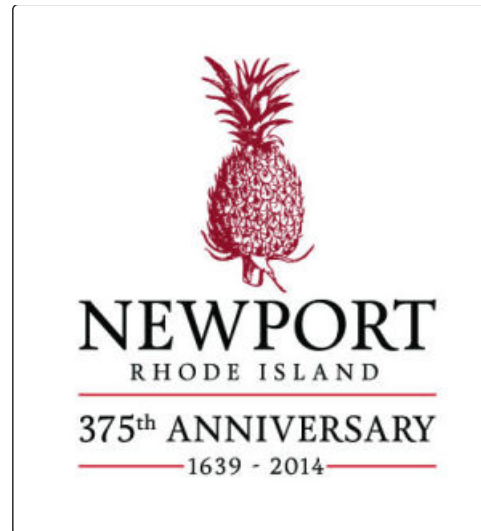
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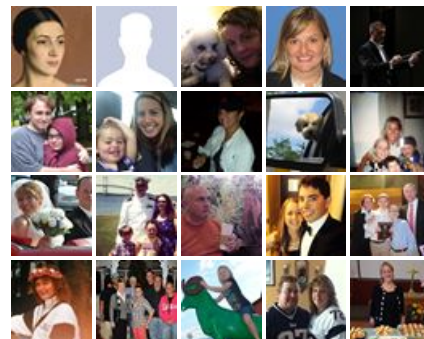
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