

ZUILL BAILEY

CELLIST

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Review: Cello-piano duo enchant audience

BY JANE PALMER

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Heavenly music briefly held an audience in rapt attention Tuesday night at the Holland Performing Arts Center.

Inspired by the clarity of sound in the Kiewit Concert Hall during the first half of their program, cellist Zuill Bailey and pianist Awadagin Pratt changed their second half performance choice. They picked the emotional "*Spiegel im Spiegel*" ("Mirror in the Mirror") by contemporary Estonian composer Arvo Pärt.

Notes hung in the air. The audience soaked them in as if they were gentle strokes of the hair and sips of luscious wine. Heads were still. Feet were still.

Earlier in the evening, this audience had been coughing and fidgeting. Children had been leaving and returning to their seats. Now the hall was quiet, spellbound by the sensuous sounds of a piano and a cello.

Compared to the complex Mendelssohn and Shostakovich compositions in the first half of the program, this Pärt piece for piano and cello was simple. The impact came from the way a single note, one finger strike on a single piano key for example, could convey a melody and resonate in the hall. The moment was simply perfect.

That said, the complexity of the other compositions on the program did showcase the impressive talents of both performers.

Cellist Bailey is a graduate of the Peabody Conservatory and the Julliard School. He has performed with major orchestras, including the San Francisco Symphony and the Illinois Symphony.

Pianist Pratt earned diplomas in piano, violin and conducting at the Peabody Conservatory. He is an assistant professor of piano and artist in residence at the College Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati.

Bailey and Pratt have been friends for 10 years and occasionally perform together.

They opened the concert with the lush melodies of Mendelssohn's "Variations Concertantes." Then they presented the four movements of Shostakovich's Sonata for cello and piano in D minor, capturing the anger, sadness and melancholy of the composition.

The duo's last piece of the evening was Brahms' Sonata No. 1 for cello and piano in E minor, a richly textured piece that showed off the pianist's fluid style and the rich tones of Bailey's 1693 Matteo Goffriller cello.

This was the final concert in the 2005-2006 Tuesday Musical Concert Series. A Tuesday Musical representative estimated the audience at 700.

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