

ZUILL BAILEY

CELLO

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The Met Museum's Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium was packed tonight with Met concert fans, as well as Simone Dinnerstein and Zuill Bailey fans. Onstage was a 1903 Hamburg Steinway (Courtesy of Klavierhaus) for Ms. Dinnerstein. Mr. Bailey performed on a 1693 Matteo Goffriller cello, once owned by Mischa Schneider of the Budapest Quartet.

Throughout this daunting musical journey through Beethoven's Complete (five) Sonatas for Piano and Cello, there were four stars to watch and listen to, the two musicians and the two historical instruments. Beethoven became accessible, unpredictable, magical, and dramatic, through the various tempos: allegro, adagio, scherzo, rondo, and andante.

The concert began with Mr. Bailey featured in mournful and slow passages, with the softest piano touch. Determined echoing and rippling chords resounded on the Steinway, with the melody increasing in connected musical whispers, prior to explosions of tonal fireworks. It was obvious from the first of the five sonatas, that this duo would highlight Beethoven's dynamism and contrasting moods. Such contrasts were evident in the fourth sonata, as Ms. Dinnerstein's dizzying keyboard spins drifted towards elongated, deep phrases.

In the third sonata, Bailey plucked the strings in pizzicato effect, while later plunging into mysterious, almost operatic intensity. In the second sonata Mr. Bailey's cello cried with longing and poignancy, before extended pauses fused the instruments into rapturous, romantic urgency.

Several years had passed between Beethoven's first two sonatas, his fifth Opus, No.'s 1 and 2 (1796), to the third sonata, Opus 69 (1808), and then, finally to the fourth and fifth sonatas, the most complex of the works, his 102nd Opus, No.'s 1 and 2 (1815). I found the final sonatas the most rhythmic, with the adagio in the fifth sonata especially moving and elegant.

Ms. Dinnerstein and Mr. Bailey formed another melodic conversation as notes merged and meandered, prior to the grand finale with its titanic, textured theme, replete with the rapid, rippling piano and rich, resonant cello.

Tonight's concert was an extraordinary feat of focus and professionalism. This youthful duo will undoubtedly leave its mark on the classical musical scene, in chamber as well as orchestral concerts.

- Dr. Roberta E. Zlokower

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