

PERLMAN/SCHMIDT/BAILEY TRIO

THE WASHINGTON POST

Perlman-Schmidt-Bailey Trio: Three Cheers

Friday, November 14, 2008; Page C03

From left, Giora Schmidt, Navah Perlman and Zuill Bailey took great pleasure in playing together Wednesday. (By Lisa-Marie Mazzucco)

Piano trios are less persistent beasts than other ensembles. Players come together for a tour or two each year and otherwise head off to wider careers. Such is the case with the Perlman-Schmidt-Bailey Trio, which gave a colorful and infectiously enjoyable performance Wednesday at the Kennedy Center.

Pianist Navah Perlman, violinist Giora Schmidt and cellist Zuill Bailey are longtime friends and fine musicians with busy solo schedules. The Wednesday evening concert, part of the Fortas Chamber Music Series, married the pleasure of reunion with the sense of risk-taking that comes of mutual knowledge and trust.

The evening marked the trio's first decade, and the group took on two gems of the literature, Beethoven's Op. 70, No. 2, and Mendelssohn's Trio No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 49. The Beethoven receives less play than its sister, the "Ghost" trio (Op. 70, No. 1), but No. 2 is an out-and-out beauty, as the ensemble revealed in its lushly drawn and flowing account. The reading built gently from the ruminative introduction to the soaring main themes, filled with climbing arabesques and elegant trills.

If the four movements of Beethoven were melodic and pulsing, the Mendelssohn was purposefully fiery. Here, even the dancing Scherzo emerged powerful and thrusting, smartly contradicting the unfair image of the composer as a lightweight.

The artists had fun at the end with some trio miniatures usually reserved for post-rehearsal dessert. A couple of Schubert transcriptions sang out with burnished melancholy, while Brahms's Hungarian Dance No. 6 moved with lilting grace and verve. After a particularly well-turned phrase, the players would nod approvingly, smile and zoom ahead.

The artists had fun at the end with some trio miniatures usually reserved for post-rehearsal dessert. A couple of Schubert transcriptions sang out with burnished melancholy, while Brahms's Hungarian Dance No. 6 moved with lilting grace and verve. After a particularly well-turned phrase, the players would nod approvingly, smile and zoom ahead.

-- Daniel Ginsberg



Colbert Artists Management

111 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019
www.colbertartists.com ~ 212-757-0782