

Amelie Nichol - 15 - Fernandina Beach High School

Concert: 2-2-18 at Prince of Peace Church

Christiania Piano Quartet

I attended this concert with a very musically dedicated band friend. The way this group worked together was absolutely amazing and you could tell the amount of effort and practice was put into it to sound that good. The concert made me feel so happy that there was such amazing talent and dedication on one stage. They were able to perform each piece with such feeling that anyone in the audience could feel exactly what each piece wanted you to. I have to admit, my favorite is not a piece with the entire ensemble though, it is a duet that demonstrated both the individual talent of the performers and the easy harmony they created with each other. The name of this piece is Halvorsen's Caprice for Two Violins, and was my favorite because while it almost seemed as if they were competing with each other they still worked seamlessly with each other to create something magnificent. Another piece I took notice of was Korngold's Suite for two violins, cello and piano left hand Op. 23, namely from what I learned of it. Before the piece was played the pianist told us that the composer of this piece, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, wrote this piece during the time of "movie music". As soon as this piece began you could tell by the grandeur of the piece that it really was during the movie era. During the concert I also learnt that the lead of the group, cellist Christopher Rex, was retiring soon after having many difficulties with his health. Overall I thought this concert was perfectly executed, but my favorite thing was definitely the lightheartedness of the performers and how well

Emily Flint  
10th grade  
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Student of Susan Magg

I was given the privilege of attending Garrick Ohlsson's piano concert. I particularly enjoyed the Scriabin piece because it had so much variation between the movements. Although it was probably one of the most technically challenging pieces I've ever heard on piano, Mr. Ohlsson was able to play it beautifully and really convey the story the piece was telling. One of the things that impressed me the most and that I will likely remember is that all of the music being played was memorized. This shows incredible technical and musical abilities presented by the artist. This concert was very inspiring to me as a young musician. It was incredible how much more is to the music than just notes and rhythms.

I would like to thank the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival for giving opportunities like this to young musicians such as myself. These concerts are incredibly inspiring and encourage the hard work and dedication it takes to pursue music as a hobby or as a career.

Emmy Beter

Age 11

Yulee Elementary School

Garrick Ohlsson, Amelia Plantation Chapel

My piano teacher, Emma Bledsoe, invited me to see Garrick Ohlsson at the Amelia Plantation Chapel. My mother and I sat in the balcony so we could look down and see Mr. Ohlsson play the piano. Miss Emma began the concert with a story from her college days when she first met Mr. Ohlsson. She first heard a piano being played rather beautifully and went to see who was playing it. When she peaked into the piano room she saw Mr. Ohlsson sitting at a piano and playing it like no one she had every seen playing it before.

When I heard Miss. Emma's story I thought we may be in for an interesting concert. She introduced Mr. Ohlsson and out he came, a very tall, sturdy man then sat at the piano. The piano seemed to look rather small compared to him until he played it. He made the piano seem bigger than him as he hammered the keys like the piano had done something really bad to him and he was almost hitting it. As he played his first piece I felt as though I was on a roller coaster going really fast on the tracks and then up and down. It was an unexpectedly fun ride.

Then Mr. Ohlsson came to my favorite piece of the night, Scriabin's Sonata No. 5, Op.53. The arrangement was very powerful, like the beginning of a rainstorm. It started as a drizzle and then lightning crashed, and then it was a small drizzle again. The piece did that several times until finally the surprise ending. Mr. Ohlsson fiercely belted out the last few lines of music running his fingers down the piano and when he got to the end he stood up. It looked like it almost surprised him! That was my favorite part of the concert.

Thank you, Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival, for allowing piano students to come to your concerts. It has really exposed me to different genres of music.



## Christiania Piano Quartet by Peter T. Sawyer

Though this was the second time I have had the privilege to hear a quartet at the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival, I was impressed, if not more impressed, than before. The Christiania Piano Quartet is the first piano quartet I have seen, and they have certainly set a worthy standard for the rest. They were highly professional, yet they seemed very ease in their performance.

Their first piece was Wolfgang A. Mozart's "Piano Quartet in G minor, K. 478." As is Wolfgang Mozart's style, it was a beautiful argument of harmonies. It modulated between piano and violin, speeding softly along. Then it went into a mysterious and mournful passage where the piano held the theme. The piano was then joined by the cello in a passage of arpeggios. The piece took a mischievous air with sharp, biting staccatos. The piano led into an almost black and white movie sound. Then the piano flew across the keys, and end abruptly with the strings.

Their second piece was from the "Suite for Two Violins, Cello and Piano Left Hand, Op. 23," by Eric Korngold. I read in the program that he composed film scores during the "Golden Age of the Silver Screen." This was quite evident in the piece.

"The Waltzer" was very discordant, with a beautiful violin passage close to the beginning; the cello plucked while the piano played in the background. It gave a foggy, Casablanca sound-picture. Its ending was quick, dizzying, and, like its beginning, discordant.

The second, "Lied," had very thoughtful opening.



## Christiania Piano Quartet

-Essay by Emma Sawyer Feb 15<sup>th</sup> 2018

In an unassuming church, on a Friday night, the Christiania Piano Quartet brought the quiet evening to life with the most timeless magic- music. Mozart's, Korngold's, De Beriot's, Halvorsen's, and Schumann's works leapt from black and white pages to vibrantly colored art through the musicians' skillful playing. Every piece delighted me.

The concert opened with Mozart's "Piano Quartet in G Minor, K. 478," and Ms. Lee played the viola for this piece. Played in three movements, each section proved unique. Mozart began with a bang and the dramatic entrance of a dark, intriguing guest. The story of the piece played out as clearly in the musicians' expressions as in the music itself. Familiar as she is with the songs, the pianist's face showed surprise, curiosity, and relief at all the right moments; and the string players performed with such fluidity, as if the music flowed out of them through their instruments. Mozart's musical guest sounded as if he had been welcomed, the strings blended and echoed each other, but then the drama returned. They posed the original question again, and the "Allegro" movement halted in mysterious accusation. A gentle piano introduced the "Andante" movement, joined by the strings. A feeling of somber thoughtfulness prevailed, and the piano took a central role while the strings used repetition to lend support. The long, peaceful walk continued with legato runs which were passed around by the players to convey a steady theme until they resolved in a soft ending. The "Rondo" movement carried you to an outdoor adventure with its festive mood and fierce accents. In your mind's eye you could see a boy running to the fair on his first holiday since forever. "What to do first?" he asks. "Doesn't matter! Everything!" he answers himself. Rain clouds threaten in the music, but he ignores them. He will have fun no matter what. A definite feeling of playfulness and youthful vigor bounces back in the theme. You can almost hear birds singing and see sunshine as you look through the boy's eyes, and there Mozart left the boy and ended the quartet. Ms. Lee then switched to the violin, and they began Erich Korngold's "Suite for Two Violins, Cello, and Piano Left Hand, Op.23." Korngold wrote this piece as commissioned by Paul Wittgenstein, a pianist and World War I veteran who lost his right arm due to a war injury. One of the pioneers of film scoring, Erich Korngold composed for sixteen Hollywood films and won two Oscars. Even though he wrote this piece a few years before his Hollywood career began, his gift for theatrical music shines through clearly. The "Walzer" movement crashed in with discordant indecision. The cello and second violin plucked as the first violin played in consistently high positions, conveying the classical romance of a mid-century film. Heavy vibrato and dark piano followed by pizzicato strings sneaked around, and the violins used romantic, blurred shifts. A frolicking interlude ensued, then all of a sudden, the piece picked up with busy, building, piled-on harmony. The piano calmed everyone down, returning the strings to their easy, almost jazzy sound. In unresolved conflict, the movement ended. The "Lied" movement opened with a feeling of new beginnings, as if it were early morning and the distressed hero from the last movement were gazing out over a wide-open prairie. Violins joined to echo that last night's misgivings have vanished and only plans for a new day remain. A soft ending resolves the movement. Intrigue returns in the "Scherzo" movement, running around on tiptoes. The cello slides and plucks. You can see the black and white screen with a hero and heroine frantically searching up and down for the answer to their mystery. They are closing in with deep, rolling piano chords and a humming, buzzing cello. Staccato strings warn of danger; but too late, the hero falls, wounded. The chase stops. Will justice prevail? Will our hero live? His breath wavers, but the fight must go on. His plucky [pun intended] right hand man takes up the chase, upstairs, downstairs, inside, outside, the strings spiral on. Now is the moment! Bass piano notes and high violins build and build, and then you know. The hero triumphs; he has defeated the villain's nefarious plot.

Charles August De Beriot's "Duo Concertante" entered next. Mr. Coucheron and Ms. Lee stood alone to play. Immediately the violins challenge each other to a duel to the death. "Surely we can talk this out!" reasons the violin to her companion, and the capricious pair are best friends again. Second violin carries the melody while everything comes up fast-blooming roses in an ascending and descending flow of harmony. But the argument starts again. They reach for their melodic dueling pistols. They will do it properly with pomp and pride, yet you hear the hesitancy in their hearts. These silly friends are all bluster and no business, so they make up again. What hot-heads they are!

In the same pose, the two violinists began the "Caprice for Two Violins" by Johan Halvorsen. This time the second violin started, and the first joined it. The entrance possessed a grand and lovely hymn-like quality as the bows traveled over all the strings smoothly. First violin begins singing his intense thoughts, but the second counters with a lighthearted pluck.

Soon they are laughing together, even whistling. Off they go to a country dance, facing off in the line, their quick feet mimicking each other's steps. On their toes, they jig and twirl around each other and end, with a smile, out of breath.

To close out the concert, the quartet played Robert Schumann's "Piano Quartet in E Flat Major, Op. 47." In the slow, quiet opening, the piano prompted the strings' phrases. They find their enthusiasm, and the phrases build. A violent argument follows as the instruments chase each other around, certain that one of them must be responsible for an unnamed crime. Accusations fly, the cello tries to mend matters, but they part angry. "Scherzo" movement sees them through a crisis. "Get help!" they shout, but they just cannot stop fighting. In the "Molto Vivace" movement, help has finally arrived, and the guilty violins are locked up. But in the happy "Finale" the group is reunited. Trying to hold it in, they parade down the street overflowing with excitement, and we share their joy.

The Christiania Piano Quartet executed every piece brilliantly and had fun in the process. Music not only praises God but also it sings of His very existence. The intelligent minds of the composers, the order in the music, and the skill of the musicians sing of their equally intelligent, orderly, skillful Creator. I am so glad I had the opportunity to attend this concert because to hear the gifts that God has given other musicians and see the joy they take in playing nurtures my love of music and my desire to play with excellence. Anyone who has the chance to see this quartet perform should jump at it.



EISA Orquidea Jerez Young

Christiania Trio

Last Friday, I went to a chamber music concert. I liked how the violins sounded with the piano. It was fun to see the show in person. I'd like to see a concert with tubas.

Justin Berger

Grade 5

Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival  
featuring Gil Shaham and Akira Eguchi

I appreciated the opportunity to attend the February 15th performance by Gil Shaham and Akira Eguchi. The pieces played by the artists showcased their talent as well as different music styles.

In the first piece Praeludium and Allegro I enjoyed the changing tempos and high energy. In the second piece The Singing Lark, the music felt sad and dramatic. The third piece, nigunim was very rhythmically challenging.

My favorite piece of the performance was the Bach arrangement Partita no. 3. I liked the high energy and lively feel of the music. The last piece was lyrical and interesting.

I really enjoyed the chamber music festival.