

The New York Times



Jennifer Taylor for The New York Times

From left, in a Merkin Hall concert by the Lark Quartet: Maria Bachmann, Deborah Buck, Yousif Sheronick (percussionist), Astrid Schween, Kathryn Lockwood and the composer Daniel Bernard Roumain.

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A Quartet's Tempting Tasting Menu

By STEVE SMITH

Published: November 21, 2006

Most chamber music concerts present audience members with a light appetizer, a contrasting dish and a main course. The Lark Quartet served that much on the first half of its program on Sunday night at Merkin Concert Hall, albeit in reduced portions. The second half was effectively the dessert tray.

The quartet was celebrating the release of a new CD, and the evening's menu included all of that disc's contents. First, as on the CD, was the Scherzo movement from Peter Schickele's String Quartet No. 2, "In Memoriam." The composer celebrated a relative's sense of humor in this movement, with lithe melodies and dizzying unison passages. A quotation from Haydn's "Lark"

Quartet acknowledged this ensemble, which commissioned the piece.

In lieu of extensive program notes, the group invited the composers present to introduce their own pieces. Paul Moravec said his "Atmosfera a Villa Aurelia" was a reminiscence of Rome. A brief, arc-shaped meditation, the work included an ardent central passage in keening tones.

Daniel Bernard Roumain had audience members clap in rhythm to convey the spirit of his String Quartet No. 5, "Rosa Parks." The Lark Quartet reordered the movements, opening with the charged centerpiece, "I Made Up My Mind Not to Move." The hushed, austere finale, "Isorhythmiclationalistic," was followed by "Klap Ur Handz," the buoyant introductory movement, which was augmented by the percussionist Yousif Sheronick's improvised accompaniment.

After intermission came another piece by Mr. Moravec, "Vince & Jan: 1945." It was inspired by a photograph of the composer's parents and was based on a passage from the wartime chestnut "I'll Be Seeing You." (Singing a few bars to illustrate, Mr. Moravec seemed delighted when most of the audience joined in.) This masterly miniature conveyed warm nostalgia, buoyant swing and wartime unease.

Five songs by George Gershwin, in elegant arrangements by Stanley Silverman, exhausted the material from the CD. But there was a bonus track, and a remix at that: a songful, muscular account of "Federico II" by the Italian composer Giovanni Sollima, to which Mr. Sheronick added dazzling improvisations.