

Georgian Music Review –Sunday November 24th, 2019
Gryphon Piano Trio



Review by Catherine Waffle - Catherine Waffle is a cellist, former piano teacher, choral singer and retired elementary school teacher and choral director.”

Chamber music lovers were delivered a gem of a concert when the Gryphon Trio visited Barrie to perform in the Georgian Music Series. Three of Canada’s preeminent musicians, educators and musical champions demonstrated their consummate skill in an intense programme. Annalee Patipatanakoon on violin, Roman Borys on cello and Jamie Parker on piano have performed together for 26 years. Audiences around the world are thoroughly impressed with their cohesive, refined sound.

The Barrie audience was treated to three serious works from Beethoven, Dvořák and Brahms. The first trio by Beethoven was composed as a set of variations on a theme from an opera. The trio achieved a clear, spare sound with limited vibrato on the strings as the languid opening worked its way into a larger theme. A ‘folksy’, childlike section saw the melody tossed from part to part with lots of syncopated rhythms. The piano dazzled in presto passages supported by short, rhythmic accents from the strings. As the trio explored the many variations, they worked their way to a lively, energetic conclusion.

The most intensive work was featured prior to the intermission. Antonin Dvořák composed his 3rd Piano Trio (Op. 65) following the death of his mother. This Czech composer from the late 1800’s has become beloved for the elements of native Bohemian folk music which permeate his works. The anguish of a grieving son is evident from the opening bars as a dark and dramatic introduction mellowed into a rich, languid section. Rollicking, rhythmic passages followed as the violin and cello seemed to chase each other through the melodies. Difficult rhythms and irregular phrases were skilfully handled by the trio, all while maintaining a beautifully blended sound. The

folk-song characteristics dominated the Allegretto. A syncopated piano melody opened against rapid, staccato notes from the strings. The slow, Adagio movement offered a sonorous melody on the cello which was passed to the violin in a lovely interplay. Beautiful cadences were achieved as one melody melded into the next. As the trio proceeded to the Finale the tension sometimes relaxed but the intensity never did.

The concert concluded with a Brahms Trio (No. 1, Op. 8). Brahms loved the lower register so it was no surprise that the cello introduced the opening theme. A rich and resonant melody was passed to the violin and then taken up by piano before being expressed by all three. Brahms took his time in fleshing out extended melodies and The Gryphon Trio offered these sumptuous delights as though they had crafted a fine wine! The four movements featured explosive, dramatic moments, introspective, expansive passages and culminated in an electrifying finish.