

Review**Rocky River Chamber Music Society:
Trio Nord at West Shore UU Church (May 6)**

by Mike Telin



It's difficult to be the sibling of an over-achieving, award-winning brother or sister. No matter how hard one tries it is nearly impossible to garner the same amount of attention from adults that is bestowed on them. The same could be said about the string family: the trio, it seems, is always

in the shadow of its more famous sibling the quartet. On Monday, May 6 at West Shore Unitarian Universalist Church, Trio Nord — Sonja Braaten Molloy, violin, Lembi Veskimets viola, and Martha Baldwin, cello — sent a clear message to the capacity audience: the string trio deserves more attention!

The concert, presented by the Rocky River Chamber Music Society, opened with the *Prelude and Fugue No. 6 in F minor*, K. 404a by Mozart. The brief yet immediately likeable piece combines an original prelude and a transcription of Wilhelm Friedemann Bach's *Fugue No. 8*. Trio Nord conveyed the work's charm beautifully, performing with nuanced elegance during the prelude and rhythmic precision during the fugue.

Dating from 1990-91, Krzysztof Penderecki's engrossing *String Trio No. 1*, a work in two continuous movements lasting less than 15 minutes, is the epitome of a musical conversation, sometimes lyrical, sometimes argumentative and sometimes violent, but always interesting. Trio Nord relished in all aspects of the conversation, expertly passing musical lines from one to another with aplomb. The opening quadruple-stop chords were arresting and the numerous pizzicato passages explosive. The work also provides each player ample opportunity to be an orator, and they played individual cadenzas at the beginning with eloquence.

The second half of the program was dedicated to a single composition, Mozart's *Divertimento for violin, viola and cello in E-flat*, K. 563. Written in 1788, the piece is considered by many to be the greatest work ever written for the string trio. Consisting of six movements and lasting roughly 45 minutes, the piece places many technical demands on all of the players and often requires them to play out of their comfort zones (where's the second violin when you need it?) Nonetheless, whatever obstacles were thrown at the players, Trio Nord made easy work of them. Throughout, Braaten Molloy, Veskimets and Baldwin produced richly-hued tones and excellent balance. The opening unison arpeggio was im-

peccably tuned. The *Adagio* was regal and the first *Menuetto and Trio* had a genteel quality as the players tossed musical lines from one to the other. Following a sublime performance of the fifth movement, *Adagio*, the playful second *Menuetto and Trios I – II* elicited some appropriate giggles from the audience. The concluding *Allegro* was brilliantly performed and the audience responded enthusiastically with a well deserved ovation, for this was an exciting performance.

The concert also brought Rocky River Chamber Music Society's thoroughly engaging 2012-13 season to a conclusion. This is another organization that has been presenting great music at no charge for many years, and their 2013-14 season promises the same.

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