

Cleveland Latvian Concert Association imports Carion Wind Quintet (Feb. 21)

by Daniel Hathaway



Any chamber music society in the United States seeking to spice up its roster of artists should waste no time in booking the Carion Wind Quintet. Based in Denmark and staffed by two Danes, two Latvians, and a Hungarian, this group stands out for playing its repertoire from memory, physically choreographing its movements, and lacing its programs with irresistibly dry Nordic humor. On Saturday, February 21 at Lakewood's Latvian Church Hall, the ensemble gave refreshing performances of music by Ligeti, Mozart, Ibert, Shostakovich and Liszt during a stop on its first American tour.

Flutist Dóra Seres, oboist Egils Upatnieks, clarinetist Egīls Šēfers, hornist David M.A.P. Palmquist, and bassoonist Niels Anders Vedsten Larsen immediately established their musical credentials with vibrant performances of György Ligeti's *Six Bagatelles*, and introduced their kinetic performance skills by cleverly rearranging themselves in different combinations according to the character of each piece. You have to see it to believe it — watch a video [here](#).

Palmquist, who kept up a lively patter throughout the program, announced that the ensemble wouldn't be moving quite so much in other pieces, like the Mozart quintet that followed, although those who had solos to play arranged themselves front and center, while duetts called for players to pair off. This sounds gimmicky, but Carion make their motions so subtly that they actually enhance the appreciation of the music.

Mid-concert, Carion put down their instruments and used their mouthpieces to play Stephen Montague's *Thule Ultima*, an avant-garde 1945 work that references the northernmost reaches of land, "so it's appropriate that we use the northernmost parts of our instruments," Palmquist quipped.

Jacques Ibert's *Trois Pièces Breves* and Shostakovitch's *Schauspiel Suite* were fodder for more virtuosic playing and humorous repartée, and the audience was delighted by the story and the music for the "[Tahiti Foxtrot](#)" from the latter, which segued into *Tea for Two*.

Carion wrapped up a delightful early evening concert with a breathtaking performance of Palmquist's arrangement of Liszt's *Grande etudes de Paganini No. 6*.

Latvians love putting on receptions, and the large audience greeted the performers over tables laden with sumptuous Nordic fare.

The quintet are planning a second American tour in 2021. Presenters take note!

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