

No Exit Presents: John Faieta at Trinity Cathedral (Feb. 28)

by Mike Telin



Although seventy-six trombones may have led the big parade, when John Faieta brought his one-man show to Trinity Cathedral on Friday, February 28, the trombone virtuoso proved that one trombone — matched with an acoustically pleasing space — is all that is needed to provide a fascinating listening experience.

Under the banner of No Exit Presents, Faieta’s beautifully constructed program treated the good-sized audience to five

musically diverse works that stretched the sound and technical capabilities of the instrument. And a subtle sense of humor imbued his charming and informative stories about each work and how it came to be written.

The program opened with Leonard Bernstein’s *Mippy II*, a tune the composer wrote as a eulogy for his brother’s beloved dog. It’s a jaunty work with a smooth-talking melody, and Faieta delivered a sparkling performance.

Born in Montevideo, Uruguay, trombonist/composer Enrique Crespo spent most of his career in Germany writing music for brass. His *Improvisation No. 1* is an engaging conversation between musical building blocks — fast/lyrical passages combined with slides and sharp articulations in all of the instrument’s registers. Faieta’s lush tone resonated beautifully in the Cathedral space.

Next up was the World Premiere of Marti Epstein’s *Abluvion*. Faieta said that she was one of his teachers and the title is a word meaning “that which is washed away.”

The seven-minute, minimalist piece featuring the wah-wah mute is a fascinating exploration of the different shades that a single note can adopt depending on which slide position is being used. The hypnotising work also includes plenty of growling multiphonics. The ending simply drifts away. The trombonist brought a sense of gracefulness to the repetitive lines.



Written for and premiered by Miles Anderson, David Felder's thirteen-minute *Boxman* for trombone and electronics was inspired by Japanese author Kobo Abe's novel, in which the lead character is a nameless, homeless person living in a box in Tokyo.

Felder's sophisticated use of electronics, here controlled by Stephan Haluska, the work develops into a soundscape that becomes an entire orchestra. The combination of a plunger mute and electronics created the illusion that a train of boxcars was rolling past.

Faieta kept volume under control as motific pods circled the Cathedral nave before exploding into a new series of pods. Zings and Zangs along with whoops and hollers coalesced into a magical sound palette that rang beautifully in the

space.

Bringing the evening to a close was Bernard Rands' *Memo 2*, the composer's answer to Luciano Berio's *Sequenza V* — for solo trombone.

The fifteen-minute piece, also written for Miles Anderson, is full of musical acrobatics. Faieta produced sounds of bop/split/yap while tapping the mute on the instrument's bell as the musical lines jumped from one register to another. *Memo 2*, requires an extraordinary agility from the player as well as a fair amount of sighing, gasping, humming, and demonic laughter, all of which Faieta had in ample supply. With a soft muted tone, the mesmerizing work faded away, bringing the evening to a musically satisfying conclusion.

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