

Young violinist featured ~ BIG ARTS Youth Concert

Sharon Roffman, violinist, was the featured "Young Artist" at Schein Hall on Sunday, March 16. Roffman, a student of Donald Weilerstein and the famed violinist, Itzhak Perlman, has won many musical awards and prizes and has appeared as soloist with several prestigious ensembles. She received her Bachelor's and Master's from the Cleveland Institute of Music.

Accompanist, Anita Pontremoli, is on the faculty of the Cleveland Institute of Music and has performed with many internationally renowned artists as well as gifted younger artists like Sharon Roffman. Opening the proceedings, Emcee Norma Gillespie welcomed the audience, thanked them for their support of young artists and expressed the hope that it would continue.

The first selection was Mozart's "Sonata, K. 376." The three movements, Allegro, Andante and Rondeau, were cleanly played by both artists. The violin sound was, at times, dwarfed by the boldness of the piano, causing an imbalance of sound. As the concert progressed, however, this problem was resolved. Roffman displayed excellent musicianship with sensitive phrasing, correct Classic Era ornamentation and accurate intonation. Pontremoli's accompaniment was also very musical while being firm and supportive of the soloist.

Roffman spoke about the history of the next work Sonata for violin and piano by the French composer, Francis Poulenc. The work was dedicated to violinist, Ginette Neveu who died in an plane crash in 1949. Pontremoli added that Poulenc was fond of jazz, and strains of "Tea For Two" could be heard throughout the work.

In the first movement, Allegro con fuoco, the recognizable harmonic and rhythmic language of Poulenc was evident. However, the melodic content is a challenge to distinguish as melodies played by both violin and piano at the same moment do not always mesh — like two people speaking at the same time. The "Intermezzo" that followed was beautifully performed, the violinist exhibiting finely tuned double-stops with a dark and sonorous sound, especially in the violin's lower register. The third movement, "Presto tragico," allowed the Roffman to execute highly technical passages with interesting pizzacatos and the obvious inclusion of "Tea For Two." The "tragico" portion of this movement was quite somber and mournful. After intermission, Sonata in G, Op. 78 by Brahms allowed both artists to display pleasantly balanced sounds. Although the first movement is titled, Vivace the tempo of the movement's meter of three, sounded more like a medium-tempo waltz. The violin's warm and expressive lyrical qualities were evident in this work and Roffman captured this mood beautifully, especially in the Adagio." The artist had explained to the audience that this movement was written for Clara Schumann whose son had died to express how much the composer loved her and her son. Both musicians



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communicated great depth of feeling with just the right dynamics and climactic development resulting in elegant phrases of great depth.

The last selection was Carmen Fantasy by the Spanish violinist, Pablo de Sarasate. Roffman wittily "tossed off" Carmen's complicated plot line to the delight of the audience. Performing now with no music or music stand, Roffman projected much better and her violin tone was much more full-bodied and resonant. She displayed virtuosic technique with melodic disjunct motion, cascading cadenzas and skilfully executed bowing in the violin's upper tessitura. ...A perfect closing piece.

The bravura performance was met by a standing ovation of "Bravos." The artists satisfied the audience's demand for more with one of the most beautiful of encores, Salute d'amour, a miniatures composed by Sir Edward Elgar. This haunting melody was exquisitely played and concluded an outstanding performance by two very accomplished artists. Fortunately, there were quite a few "young artists" in attendance who may be inspired to further their musical interests and goals.