

Splash Magazines

The Peninsula Symphony and Saint Michael Trio Plays the Blues Review - A Evening of Delight

By Barbara Keer

[View the Full Article](#) | [Return to the Site](#)

It was a spectacular night after a gloomy day filled with political ups and downs. What a great way to escape into the compelling world of music. Entering the newly refurbished Fox Theatre in Redwood City, my husband and I were impressed by how beautiful it is, how lush and how it hearkened back to early days of movie theatres. It was built in 1929.



Beautiful Fox Theatre, Redwod City, Photo- B.Keer

There was a kind of “triple feature” that awaited us, beginning with the preconcert lecture. The talk this evening was actually an interview, with David Latulippe, host of KALW’s “Open Air” interviewing the distinguished composer, Gwyneth Walker, whose works we were soon privileged to hear. The interview was charming and captivating. Walker lives on a dairy farm in Vermont, is a full-time composer and has a huge repertoire of wide ranging works. She also began her musical career at age two and was composing for her neighborhood by age five. She even made an Italian professor forget she was female because her melodies were so good. She described her work as American and reminiscent of **Aaron Copland**.



Mitchell Sardou Klein, Conductor

Following the interview, a group of musicians from the Peninsula Symphony gathered on the second floor balcony forming a Dixieland Band, and entertained guests until it was time for the concert to begin. This was an unexpected and lively treat.



Matt Germano, Drums

Most of the music of the evening combined jazz elements with the full orchestra and classical aspects. The season is featuring women composers. Watch for others to follow.



Gwyneth Walker, composer

The first number was Gwyneth Walker's *Concert Suite*. While Walker described her work as similar to Copland but with humor, I kept seeing dancers in my mind's eye that would be a bit like "Appalachian Spring". I asked her about this at intermission but she felt that dance detracts from the music and it the music should have the chance to be enjoyed. Certainly the audience enjoyed the music that was clearly "American" and even contained a cowbell.



Daniel Cher, Violin

Following this music with an "American flavor", the audience was treated to the "French flavor" of Claude Bolling (arr. Ron Miller). Claude Bolling is currently 87 and had figured out many years ago how to blend a classical orchestra with jazz, according to Russell Hancock of the Saint Michael Trio. The Saint Michael Trio was another treat of the evening.



Saint Michael Trio and Peninsula Symphony- wonderful music

One description of this group is, “What do you get when you combine a medical doctor, a software engineer, and a Silicon Valley veteran? One of the Bay Area’s most popular groups, the Saint Michael Trio! Not only are they shaping the latest landscape of global technology, but they are also one of the most prominent classical groups performing today. They are Daniel Cher (violin), Russell Hancock (piano), and Michel Flexer (cello)...”. This group was amazingly skilled and energetic and their playing blended perfectly with the symphony as they performed the work of Claude Bolling - *From Suite for Orchestra and jazz trio – Aria and Animé. Amoureuse, Badine*



Michel Flexer, cello

After intermission, the music was lively and fun including: Cameron Wilson
Jive in Blue Major, W.C. Handy St. Louis Blues.

However, *Jive in Blue Major* with Chad Goodman conducting brought a bit of Canada along, specifically written for the trio.



Chad Goodman, PSO Assistant Conductor

“Argentinian flavor” was introduced with Astor Piazzolla’s, *Libertango*, another wonderful blend of jazz and classical symphony.

This memorable evening closed with Ben Bernie & Maceo Pinkard *Sweet Georgia Brown*, and the audience left to mingle with the symphony members in the lobby.



*The "Dixieland Band", balcony after the performance at Fox Theatre,
Photo: Steven Cooper*

More about the Peninsula Symphony.

Photo credit: Anna Newman unless otherwise noted



The Fabulous Saint Michael Trio

Published on Jan 24, 2017

[View the Full Article](#) | [Return to the Site](#)