



The Lyric Arts Trio (Sarah Tannehill, soprano; Elena Lence Talley, clarinet; Dan Velicer, piano) presented a hodgepodge program last weekend that Talley described simply as “we like it.” Those three words often strike fear in my heart, and more importantly, my ear, because the usual result is self-indulgent drivel. Luckily, the LAT has very good taste and their program was as enjoyable for them as it was for the audience.

Gordon Jacob’s *Four Seasonal Songs* ran the gamut (as one would expect) from the sprightly “Summer,” crispness of “Autumn,” swirling snowdrifts of wordless “Winter” to “Spring’s” jaunty bird calls. Tannehill tried valiantly to overcome Grace and Holy Trinity’s unforgiving acoustics but her diction was unfortunately lost most of the time. Her facial expressions and Jacob’s text painting helped to achieve an impression of the lyrics however.

The Brahmsian *Three Songs* by Louis Spohr’s student, Gottfried Herrmann, showcased Talley’s command over all ranges of her instrument. The piece was syrupy and utterly romantic especially the first movement “Erfüllung.” “Ich denke dein” displayed Tannehill’s impressive legato and ability to float pitches effortlessly. After an uneasy start to “Du bist wie eine Blume,” the ensemble quickly recovered and navigated the elastic tempi with skill.

Velicer finally had some meaty parts in the world premiere of Jean Belmont Ford’s *En la memoria, Yda Garcia Lence*. The first piece to fully capitalize on the idea of the trio as three equal parts, Ford’s piece was pure loveliness. The piano part’s modal harmonies complimented the clarinet’s embellished lines as the soprano’s lyrical line wove in and around the other two. The second half of the piece, with its text taken from Cuban prayers to the Virgin Mary provided an emotional dénouement. The final “Salve... Madre... Salve” was simple and magical, and the piano’s widely spaced buoy bell/church chime imitations brought the piece to an ethereal end. The piece and performance were captivating and the audience demanded (at emcee John Schaefer’s prompting) an immediate encore upon the ensemble’s return from intermission. The second hearing was as enjoyable and moving as the first.



A transcribed Mozart aria offered an emotional sorbet after Ford’s moving work. Talley transcribed the violin obbligato in “L’amerò, sarò costante” from Mozart’s early opera *Il rè pastore* for clarinet. The transcription was successful because of Talley’s wonderful control of her upper register. Her sound was never strained or strident. The cadenza between Talley and Tannehill was uncharacteristically sloppy, however.

Ralph Vaughan Williams’ unfinished set of vocalise for soprano and clarinet were deftly performed. Talley

and Tannehill's timbres blended seamlessly. Tannehill's coloratura articulations were executed with laser beam precision and the echoes in the third movement were charming. Canadian composer Srul Irving Glick was unknown to me before this performance. His work *Images at Nightfall, Georgian Bay* was evocative, most notably in the clarinet mimicry of a loon call, but unfortunately the piece was overly long.

Capping the performance was Stella Sung's *Three Poems of Robert Frost*. The set was entertainingly varied with the shimmering second movement ("Neither Out Far Nor In Deep") and the fantastically demented circus music of the Sprechstimme-by-way-of-Prokofiev third ("Line Written in Dejection on the Eve of Great Success"). Occasionally humorous music can come off as twee yet the glint in Tannehill's eye as she delivered the text was anything but.

Talley mentioned that this local trio rarely performs in Kansas City as they primarily concentrate on outreach and run-outs. That is a shame as they are a fine professional ensemble worthy of many more local engagements. Personally I'd be very interested in their all-American program and an all-German Romantic program.

REVIEW:

Summer Music at the Cathedrals

Lyric Arts Trio

2:00 pm, Sunday, August 29, 2010

Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral

13th and Broadway, Kansas City, MO

For more information visit <http://lyricartstrio.com/>

By [Lee Hartman](#)



Traditional and New Classical Contributor

Lee Hartman holds degrees from the University of Missouri-Kansas City (D.M.A., M.M.) and the University of Delaware (B.M.). At the University of Delaware, he received a Dean's Scholar position enabling him to pursue an individually designed academic program combining music education and composition. At the University of Missouri-Kansas City he served for three years as the Assistant Director to Musica Nova, the conservatory's new music ensemble, while teaching a variety of composition classes.

In 2007 he was invited to both the Iceland Academy of the Arts in Reykjavík, Iceland and the Sichuan Conservatory in Chengdu, China to give lectures and master classes in composition. In the summer of 2009, Hartman served as an orchestra manager for the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble and Aspen Opera Theater Center for various performances. He serves on the National Executive Committee of the Society of Composers, Inc. as Submissions Coordinator. His primary composition instructors include James Mobberley, Chen Yi, Zhou Long, Paul Rudy, John Beall, and Jennifer Margaret Barker. He currently teaches music theory at the University of Central Missouri having previously taught at UD (2007–08) and UMKC (2006–07).

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