

Broad Street Review

Solzhenitsyn in a chamber trio



BY: Tom Purdom
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Playing piano in a trio (instead of conducting an orchestra), Ignat Solzhenitsyn's big revelation was the sensitivity and control he brings to chamber music.

Philadelphia Chamber Music Society: Beethoven, Horn Sonata in F Major; Schubert, Piano Sonata in C Minor, "*Relique*"; Brahms, Trio for Violin, Piano and Horn in E-flat Minor. Jennifer Montone, horn; Ida Levin, violin; Ignat Solzhenitsyn, piano. March 12, 2010 at Independence Seaport Museum, 211 S., Columbus Blvd. (Penn's Landing). (215) 569-8080 or pcmsconcerts.org.

Solzhenitsyn: Confidence of his vision.

Solzhenitsyn minus Orchestra

TOM PURDOM

It seemed strange to see Ignat Solzhenitsyn walk onstage alone. In the last few years I've grown accustomed to watching him work with an orchestra, either conducting or playing a piano concerto. (And sometimes doing both simultaneously, as when he conducts a Mozart concerto from the piano for the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia.)

Solzhenitsyn's latest appearance on the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society schedule was the first time I'd heard him play a chamber music program in several years. The evening's big revelation was the sensitivity and control he brings to chamber music. You could hear that sensitivity in the first bars of the Beethoven sonata for horn and piano that opened the program, and he maintained it throughout the evening.

I attended this concert mostly for the Brahms horn trio, but the highlight of the program was Solzhenitsyn's encounter with Schubert's "*Relique*" sonata. For that, playing by himself, Solzhenitsyn added a third quality: the authority of a musician who has arrived at a clear picture of the piece he's working with and feels confident that he's come to a sound conclusion.

The event's spotlighted virtuoso was the Philadelphia Orchestra's young principal horn, Jennifer Montone. I would have liked the horn trio better if she had colored it with a more poetic tone, particularly in the *adagio*, but

Montone's precision served her well in the *scherzo* and the high-spirited final *allegro*.

Ida Levin added a dark, sensual quality to the all-important violin part, and Solzhenitsyn's piano provided the foundation that blended all three instruments into a unified whole in the ensemble sections. The final bars concluded the trio with all the punch of the big orchestras that Montone and Solzhenitsyn work with on other evenings.