

Dal duet deserves attention

by Will O'Hara

Lynn Stodola and Phillippe Djokic are strangers to Halifax audiences, not because they are seldom seen here, but because they usually play to empty seats. They are two fine musicians who played with their usual quality, works by Bach, Prokofiev and Franck to a small but appreciative audience at the Rebecca Cohn.

The Sonata for Violin and Harpsichord by J.S. Bach, is a piece that gives equal importance to both instruments although Lynn Stodola was handicapped by the poor quality of the harpsichord she played. In spite of her rhythmic drive, especially in the allegro movements, the sound was more of a background rumble than the crisp, brilliant sound of a good harpsichord. Djokic has a tone like liquid honey, so clear by comparison that the piece became a Sonata for violin with harpsichord accompaniment. The Adagio movement was rhythmically so complex that at times it sounded as though the violin and harpsichord were playing different bars at once, but they weren't. The music is heavily syncopated and it is a credit to their skill as a duo that they kept it together as well as they did. The lute stop was effective in this movement though it was awkwardly applied mid-note.

To quote Sidney Finkelstein (and the completely plagiarized program note), "In the final Allegro the first theme is introduced by the violin and developed fugally by three voices..." Put another way, the Allegro has the power of a runaway locomotive if it is played well, and it was.

The Prokofiev Sonata in D major was originally written for flute and piano but was transcribed for violin and piano. In this piece, Lynn Stodola is in her element. It was her

responsiveness to the violin that kept the two parts intimate. The Prokofiev Sonata, one of his last works, is a collage of different rhythms and colours. It has the potential to carry the audience through a circus of musical events, but somehow it didn't do that. Djokic seemed to translate the score too literally; musical jokes were delivered like sermons. It might have been better if Djokic had let himself go a little more as he did in the Franck. Had he played more like Grappelli than like Menuhin in some parts, the life and humour of the piece would have been more apparent.

After the intermission, Djokic and Stodola let everything out in the Sonata in A major, a warm romantic piece by the French organist Cesar Franck. As a duo they were impeccable, both responding to the shifts in focus from piano to violin and back. The piano seemed more dominant in this than in the Prokofiev, especially in the second movement where it resembled Chopin or Liszt. Again Stodola showed her excellence not as an accompanist but as a pianist in a strong duo.

Djokic had been saving his fireworks for this Sonata. He played with the quality that makes sincere expression so different from feigned expression. In the final movement, he played a beautiful melody a bar behind and an octave above the piano. This is an easy trick, but it can sound like the blind leading the blind if played poorly. In this case, though, it was a flawless imitation which isn't an easy trick at all.

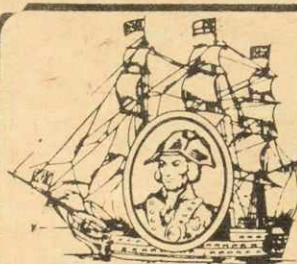
Lynn Stodola and Phillippe Djokic are both members of the Dalhousie Music Department faculty so they will be performing again in the future. They're worth seeing next time.



Gazette needs staff

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the middle and lower classes. The resistance to the military dictatorship culminated in the deaths of

many students and working people who occupied the Technical University of Athens, while demonstrating their desire for democracy.



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