



Stephanie Sebastian, Jaime Weisenblum, Nina Tobias, A tight ensemble.

## Tight trio

By THOMAS BAUER

On Wednesday November 12, the Canadian Piano Trio were featured in the second concert of the *Debut Atlantic* series at the Dunn Theatre. The series, a co-operative venture of the Touring Office of the Canada Council, CBC Stereo and local promoters, aims to introduce Atlantic audiences to prominent and emerging Canadian classical musicians.

The Canadian Piano Trio, formed in 1983, consist of Stephanie Sebastian on piano, Jaime Weisenblum on violin, and Nina Tobias on cello. They have released an album on the Fanfare label and are currently trio in residence at York University in Toronto.

The evening's programme included works by two mainstream composers and two lesser known composers, one of them Canadian. The first offering, Beethoven's Trio No. 3 in C Minor, featured Ms. Sebastian on piano. Although the performance was musically correct, it lacked vitality and was at times hampered by an uneven balance which made the violin barely audible.

These minor shortcomings were quickly addressed in the next Trio, No. 2 Opus 76 in B Minor by Joaquin Turina. The performers warmed to the task of interpreting the sensuous moods created by this fiery, yet introspective Spanish composer. The lush textures, evidence of Ravel's influence on Turina, filled the Dunn with a sound which was incredibly full-bodied, considering that only three people were producing it without the aid of amplification.

The second half of the program featured a new composition commissioned by the Canadian Piano Trio from Winnipeg composer Sid Robinovitch. While most concert-goers tend to view the inclusion of contemporary works with trepidation, Robinovitch's offering turned out to be a pleasant surprise.

Entitled "I'se the B'y" and based, albeit loosely, on the popular song of the same name, the composition blended elements of jazz and 20th century atonal techniques. Melodic fragments of the original tune were tossed back and forth between the violin and cello over a rhythmic and often percussive piano accompani-

ment, ultimately resolving into a highly stylized arrangement played by all three performers. While some would consider the above a guaranteed recipe for disaster, the actual music was more enjoyable than its perfunctory description might suggest.

The Mendelssohn Trio No. 1 was the highlight of the evening's performance. In addition to its sumptuous melodies, this piece is a technical tour-de-force. It served to showcase the abilities of all three musicians and demonstrate some tight ensemble playing. This display of musical skill, which had been hinted at but never fully disclosed before, brought the concert to an ending.

For those who missed the performance, CBC Stereo will be airing a taped concert by the Canadian Piano Trio on its Arts National Program during Debut Atlantic Week, March 16-20, 1987. Another trio, the Henri Brassard Piano Trio, will be appearing at the Dunn Theatre on January 18, 1987, as part of the "Chamber Music at Dalhousie" series. *Debut Atlantic* continues on January 29, 1987, with pianist Louis Lortie.

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