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Celebrating Hungarian Composers in Grand Style

Talented young musicians perform Rózsa, Bartók and Kodály

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By ALIK THEOS and NADIA GHATTAS

It's not often that a classical concert fills the house these days but the Joan and Sanford I. Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall fulfilled that promise on October 1. The audience came to hear three young musicians—**Anastasia Khitruk**, violin, **Andrey Tchekmazov**, cello, and **Elizaveta Kopelman**, piano—who entertained the audience with the works of three great Hungarian composers.

The occasion was the 100th anniversary of the birth of renowned film and classical composer Miklós Rózsa.

With the exception of Bartók's *Romanian Folk Dances*, the entire program was based upon authentic Hungarian classical music. A heavy concentration on any musical or ethnic style of programming a concert can be a challenge, possibly even risky, because of its musical constancy.

No matter how great or subtle differences exist between composers and their work even last night's obviously sophisticated and adoring audience occasionally displayed signs or “over kill” particularly during the second half of the program. But, in the end, the familiarity of Bartók's *Romanian Dances* brought the audience to their feet.

Miklós Rózsa was to the Hungarian manor born. Born in 1907 to a life of privilege and inspired by Bartók and Kodály, he embraced his native country's musical heritage and infused it with Western harmony. He composed scores for movies.

Rózsa's duet for violin and piano opened the program. Anastasia Khitruk and Elizaveta Kopelman immediately revealed their skills but at times lost that connection to each other that ensemble playing demands. Given its obvious talent, it was probably stage nerves.

Ms. Khitruk excelled in performing the Bartók Sonata for Violin Solo, Op. 124. In this extraordinarily difficult work, she never lost control of her playing. Her love of her instrument was evident and clearly touched the heart of her audience as they listened in absolute silence.

Ms. Khitruk's violin and Mr. Tchekmazov's cello became a duet of musical lovers in their interpretation of the Kodály Duo for Cello and Violin, Op. 7. One moment their instruments melted together and the next they soared to artistic heights. Their beautiful playing enchanted everyone and not even a cough was heard from the audience.

The Rózsa North Hungarian Peasant Songs and Dances, Op. 5 was artfully played and Bartók's Romanian folk dance for violin and piano ended the program. The evening concluded with excitement and a wonderful audience response. Good luck to these fine young professionals!

Anastasia Khitruk comes from a musical and artistic family. After immigrating to the United States, Ms. Khitruk continued the violin studies she had begun at Moscow's Central Music School. Her talent was immediately recognized when she made her orchestral debut at the age of eight.

Since then, she has appeared in concert and recital halls worldwide, including numerous performances in Boston, Los Angeles, New York, Aspen, London, Geneva, Adelaide, Sofia, Paris, and Moscow.

Ms. Khitruk 's passionate devotion to musical discovery has been the hallmark of her career. She has brought her fiery virtuosity to the service of the unjustly forgotten Russian composer Ivan Khandoskin, Kapellmeister for Catherine the Great.

Andre Tchekmazov cellist, soloist, recitalist and chamber musician, is Grand Prize winner of the Vittorio Gui International Competition and Prize Winner of Premio Trio de Trieste. He has performed throughout the world. Mr. Tchekmazov is hailed by critics as "extraordinary musician," The Washington Post reports.

The concert marked the Naxos CD release of Ms. Khitruk's recording of the Rózsa Violin Concerto.