

THE Strad

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Sometimes what works well in small spaces doesn't translate to larger ones, and vice versa. Violinist **Fritz Gearhart** and pianist **John Owings** are both distinguished players. The former has cool, clean sounds with tasteful intelligent phrasing and beautifully produced vibrato, especially in cantabile passages. Owings, for his part, never produces an inappropriate sound. Nevertheless, on this occasion at least, they both lacked the interpretive profile necessary for successful public performance. What was doubtless impressive in the studio was miniaturized in even so small a venue as Weill Recital Hall, where they performed (26 October). Both Prokofiev sonatas and that composer's Five Melodies op.35a shared the programme with the premiere of Robert Kyr's Variations in the Name of Peace, based on the Southern hymn tune 'What Wond'rous Love is This' and written in response to the March 2003 invasion of Iraq. A heartfelt plea for peace, the work was eclipsed by the Prokofiev works that flanked it, particularly the Sonata op.80. In the big major-mode tune of the Andante, Gearhart's beautiful sound was heard to best advantage.