

VIOLIN VIOLA CELLO BASS FIDDLE
STRINGS

A Milestone Concert

May 2007

By EDITH EISLER

Violinist **Sylvia Rosenberg** gave her tenth concert for the Midamerica Productions series on January 30 at Weill Recital Hall in New York—a milestone in a demanding, successful international performing and teaching career. As always, her program mixed old and new, familiar and adventurous music: two new Romantic sonatas framed by three 20th-century pieces as bookends and centerpiece.

It opened with Dallapiccola's "Due Studi," written for the 1947 Festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music and inspired by two Piero della Francesca frescoes, one white, one red. The Sarabanda is all pianissimo with tinkling, whispering, muted sound effects. The Fanfara e Fuga is all fortissimo with powerful crashing chords and leaps.

Ingeniously using 12-tone technique for complex counterpoint, Dallapiccola surprisingly ends the work with a clear tonal chord.

Elliott Carter wrote "Riconoscenza per Goffredo Petrassi" for solo violin in 1984 for Petrassi's 80th birthday. Based on three contrasting ideas labeled sweet, furious, and calm, the piece revels in the violin's infinitely variegated wealth of color and sonority. Rosenberg, a committed champion of contemporary music, played both works with great stylistic authority.

The concert closed with Béla Bartók's Rhapsody No. 1, written in 1928 for Joseph Szigeti. It is full of the Hungarian and Romanian folk-melodies Bartók had been

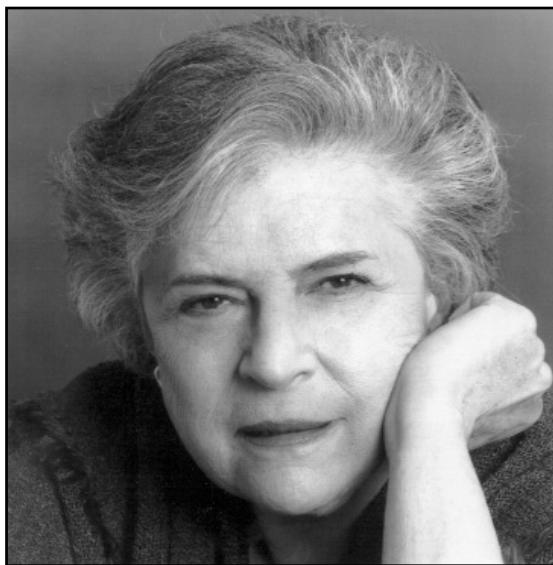
collecting: native idiomatic rhythms and harmonies are used throughout and it has become a repertory favorite. The playing captured the work's improvisatory character with colorful inflections, flexible liberties, and passionate declamation.

Schubert's music belongs to everybody, and no two players ever agree on all the details. The performance of his Sonata in A major, D. 574, was expressive, but extroverted rather than dreamy and inward.

Schumann's somber D minor Sonata, No. 2, Op. 121, is a problem piece. Except for the serene slow movement, it has an agitated, driving intensity. Grandly conceived and discursive, it juxtaposes flowing melodies with breathless, short motives passed back and forth between the instruments, creating a fragmented feeling. Rosenberg, however, succeeded in giving it continuity by making details part of the long line and using her beautiful, variable tone to weave the harmonic and melodic texture into coherence.

Pianist **Barry Snyder**, Rosenberg's frequent partner, supported her empathically throughout, but the open piano was often too loud.

An overflow audience listened in rapt attention and responded with enthusiasm.



ADVENTUROUS: Sylvia Rosenberg.