

The Sun

Northern Delights

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By FRED KIRSHNIT

Besides Chopin's reverence for Mozart, the two composers shared the awful fact that each died much too young. On Saturday afternoon, the fine **Waterville Trio** presented a contrast between one of the last works of the earlier composer and one of the first of his ardent admirers.

Those of us who spend time in northern New England are familiar with this chamber group from New Hampshire, but Gotham residents may know them only because the two string players perform with a local group called the New York Philharmonic. Cellist **Qiang Tu** is a relative newcomer, but violinist **Hanna Lachert** has been with the Phil since 1972. It was heartening to spot more than one of their orchestra mates in attendance at the soldout Weill Recital Hall.

In what seems very northern New England in character, Ms. Lachert performs on a violin made by her husband. Its rich, warm, and deep tone was just right for the ensemble's interpretation of Mozart's Trio in C major, KV 548, which can be viewed as proto-Romantic, anticipating an era when emotions bubbled over the surface of the music. This current performance was notable for its clarity of line and decidedly modern sound. Pianist **Helene Jeanney**, whom I heard in an excellent duo recital with the Bulgarian violinist Lilia Donkova last June, handled the complex keyboard part with seeming ease, and Ms. Lachert impressed with a well-drawn singing line.

I became a bit nervous when the violinist began to speak prior to her performance of what she believed to be the New York premiere of Krzysztof Penderecki's Sonata No. 2 for violin and piano. Her insistence on his greatness only made me more skeptical. Stylistically,

Mr. Penderecki is the Forrest Gump of late 20th-century music, composing in every mood from the anti-war avantgardism of the 1960s to diatonic, relatively traditional works for the Catholic Church commissioned by fellow Pole Pope John Paul II. This sonata was written for Anne-Sophie Mutter and might be best described as stretched tonality expressing unrelenting angst emulating or imitating — depending on your opinion of Mr. Penderecki — many of the mature works of Dmitri Shostakovich.

Ms. Lachert was correct about one aspect of the piece: It is difficult to perform, and both she and Ms. Jeanney deserve high praise for the effort. On paper there are five movements, but to the ear there are only three, two relatively fast movements surrounding a long — she did warn us about this — middle section. It was curious to observe the reactions of audience members, which roughly followed generational lines. The young woman directly in front of me — who, incidentally, left before the Chopin — bobbed her head vigorously through the thorniest sections of the slow movement, while some decidedly older heads nodded in a downward direction but occasionally stayed down for a mid-concert power nap.

Frédéric Chopin penned the Trio in G minor when he was 18, and it unabashedly features the piano in the manner of Haydn or early Mozart. Ms. Jeanney was expressive in her reading and her colleagues were virtually flawless in their accompaniment. There is a lot of frisson to this piece as well as some strong hints of the superb melodist about to emerge onto the Paris salon scene, especially in the Adagio sostenuto, which this day was performed quite lovingly.