

TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

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Calder Quartet shows strengths for Artist Series

By Steve Hicken
SPECIAL TO THE DEMOCRAT

Tallahassee's musical weekend continued with a Sunday afternoon Artist Series concert by the Calder Quartet at FSU's Opperman Music Hall.

The Calderys (Benjamin Jacobson and Andrew Bulbrook, violin, Jonathan Moerschel, viola, and Eric Byers, cello) opened their program with Felix Mendelssohn's "Capriccio," Op. 81, No. 3. This short work neatly showed where the quartet's strengths lie. The lyrical introduction showed their warm, cohesive sound, while the fast fugal section revealed their balanced approach to ensemble playing.

REVIEW

Franz Schubert's Quartet in A-minor (D.804, Op.29, "Rosamunde") is a challenging work, calling for a symphonic approach and a keen sense of form. The Calderys readily met the challenges and delivered a convincing, shapely performance. Their ensemble playing and their conception of the quartet as four equal voices (rather than a first violin and an accompanying trio) serve them very well in works of the classical and romantic repertoire.

The Calder Quartet is dedicated to the performance of contemporary music, and it may be this dedication that has shaped their four equal voices approach, since most new string quartets are written that way. This is certainly the case in Terry Riley's "Cadenza on the Night Plain," which includes cadenzas for all four instruments. Riley is one of the founders of Minimalism, and though he had expanded his stylistic palette by the time he wrote "Cadenza" in the early 1980s, the repetitions and clear structures of minimalist music still inform the piece.

This performance was a revelation with rich sound, excellent intonation, and a sense of style — no doubt a result of the quartet's having studied the work with Riley. The warmth with which the audience received this unusual piece is an indication that Tallahassee audiences are more open to the new than most of the city's presenting organizations are willing to test.