



newsreview.com CHICO NEWS & REVIEW: YOUR INDEPENDENT ALTERNATIVE NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT RESOURCE

[LOCAL STORIES](#) | [GREEN](#) | [HEALTH](#) | [OPINIONS](#) | [CALENDAR](#) | [ARTS&CULTURE](#) | [MUSIC](#) | [DINING](#) | [FILM](#) | [GUIDES](#) | [N&R EVENTS](#) | [CLASSIFIEDS](#)

SEARCH THE SITE

TOOLBOX

[PRINT FRIENDLY](#) | [E-MAIL THIS STORY](#)

ADJUST FONT SIZE: [SMALLER](#) | [LARGER](#)

[LINK TO THIS STORY ON YOUR SITE](#)

[RSS FEEDS](#)

music

Like 1 Tweet 1

Pitch perfect

Quartet's mixture of contemporary and classic makes for stunning performance

By [Christine G.K. LaPado-Breglia](#)
christinel@newsreview.com

This article was published on [03.07.13](#).

Laxson Auditorium was noticeably not filled last Wednesday (Feb. 27) when one of America's finest string quartets, the Calder Quartet, took the stage. Other than the fact that so many missed out on the quartet's stellar performance, the shortage of bodies in the audience was of little consequence—those in attendance were moved to the point of offering enough clapping and cheering as to sound almost like a full house at times.

The Calder Quartet—known for its virtuosity in a number of musical styles, from classical to experimental to rock—consists of first violinist Benjamin Jacobson, Andrew Bulbrook on second violin, Jonathan Moerschel on viola and cellist Eric Byers.

The group began the evening's program with a piece by contemporary composer Ben Johnston, "String Quartet No. 4, Amazing Grace." True to the quartet's (and the composer's) experimental bent, the 10-minute-long piece started right off with an altered version of the melody of the familiar 18th-century hymn "Amazing Grace," played by the violins and viola. The cello entered after a short while, adding a warm depth to the beautiful, slightly haunting music.

Notably, the piece sounded as if it harkened back to the 1700s—it had such an old-time Americana feel to it at times that it resembled the theme music from some of the 18th/19th-century period films that I have been watching lately (e.g., *Amazing Grace* and HBO's *John Adams*). At the same time, the music also sounded strikingly modern, edgy, in its rhythmic and harmonic adventurousness. At one point late in the piece, the group's expert playing evoked both the pastoral and the somewhat disturbing sound of bees buzzing in waves of crescendos and decrescendos.

"Cadenza on the Night Plain," by Terry Riley—who has composed numerous string



The Calder Quartet (named after famed American sculptor Alexander Calder) at Laxson Auditorium; (from left) Benjamin Jacobson, Andrew Bulbrook, Jonathan Moerschel and Eric Byers.
PHOTO BY MELANIE MACTAVISH

Review:

Calder Quartet
Wednesday, Feb. 27
Laxson Auditorium
Chico State
Advertisement



sweetdeals

Up to 75% off gift certificates at the best places in Chico, from your friends at the CN&R.

[Gogi's Cafe](#)
50% off

[\\$25 value for \\$12.50](#)
[Jon & Bon's Yogurt](#)
50% off

[\\$10 value for \\$5](#)
[Lotus Flower Imports](#)
50% off

[\\$15 value for \\$7.50](#)
[Bacio Catering & Carry Out Cuisine](#)
40% off

[\\$10 value for \\$6](#)



calendar

[TIRED OF LOOKING FOR WORK? WE CAN HELP!](#)



Sa, 3/16, 10am-noon
at Paradise Alliance Church.

SEARCH THE CALENDAR

ALL CATEGORIES

HAPPENING TODAY

quartets (including this one) for the famed Kronos Quartet—followed the Johnston piece. “Cadenza,” said Bulbrook, who introduced the pieces the foursome would be playing, was “another take on the history of America” and “probably Terry’s most acclaimed string quartet.” The enthralling, inventive, 35-minute-long piece features four captivating cadenzas (one from each of the four string players) that punctuate the piece’s movements. They had titles like, “Where Was Wisdom When We Went West?” and “The Night Cry of Black Buffalo Woman.”

It was evident—especially during the Riley piece, which required much attention to perform the complex composition—that the violinists have played together for quite a long time. They watched one another intently at times and played with such partnership (including synchronized bow movements) as can only come from a lot of time invested together.

Ludwig van Beethoven’s seven-movement *String Quartet No. 14 in C# minor, Op. 131*, came after the intermission, during which my friend Grace said she was looking forward to it, traditionalist that she is. And the quartet did not disappoint.

In fact, the four players so accurately and appropriately immersed themselves in the Beethoven piece that if one had not heard the modern music that came before on the night’s program, one would have guessed that these impeccably talented men spend their time doing little else besides focusing on doing justice to the performance of classical music.

One local violin player, who was equally impressed with the Calder Quartet’s virtuosity, noted at intermission, “I really like their judicious use of vibrato. They don’t cover up bad intonation with vibrato [as some violin players do].” In other words, each member of the group precisely played his instrument in what seemed to be perfect tune throughout the entire performance.

The Calder Quartet’s musical performance was as near to perfect as any that I have heard. Kudos to Chico Performances for bringing this mesmerizing, world-class string quartet to a local stage.



WITHIN MILES OF ZIP

music



[Sing along](#)

Folk-music legend Peter Yarrow has shared music of conscious for five decades.

[What would happen if ...](#)

Paul Dresher’s journey of musical exploration and invention.

[It’s a uke thing](#)

Uke devotees show their love of the instrument at second annual We Heart Ukulele Fest.

[Coldwave riders](#)

Brooklyn synth duo making reverb-soaked waves with debut album.

- [MORE MUSIC FEATURES AND COLUMNS](#)
- [LOCAL BANDS & MP3s](#)

MUSIC CALENDAR

All Genres
All Venues
Happening:

1 1

[Contact us about this story](#)

RELATED LINKS:

[See all stories published in Music Feature](#)

[See all stories published in Music](#)

Reader Comments

No comments yet. Be the first by posting your comment below.

Sign in to submit a comment:

e-mail:
password:

Don't have a login yet? [Join now!](#), it's fast and free!
Help! I [forgot my password](#)

Post anonymous comment:

If you wish to comment anonymously, provide your valid email address here and you'll be allowed to do so.

e-mail:

You will be sent an email confirmation with a link that you must follow to validate your email address before your comment will appear on the site.

dining

DINING REVIEWS

[A crab in every pot](#)
[Greening the ridge](#) ★★★★★
[Follow the crumbs](#) ★★★★★
[‘Good on everything’](#)
[Chocolate for all](#)
[MORE DINING REVIEWS AND FEATURES](#)

DINING DIRECTORY

ALL CUISINES
ALL RESTAURANTS
WITHIN MILES OF ZIP

film

★★★★☆ [A Good Day to Die Hard](#)
★★★★☆ [Amour](#)
★★★★☆ [Bless Me, Ultima](#) NEW
★★★★☆ [Dark Skies](#)
★★★★☆ [Hansel and Gretel: Witch ...](#)
★★★★☆ [Jack the Giant Slayer](#) NEW
★★★★☆ [Mama](#)
★★★★☆ [Rust and Bone](#)
★★★★☆ [Side Effects](#)
★★★★☆ [Silver Linings Playbook](#)
★★★★☆ [Warm Bodies](#)
★★★★☆ [Zero Dark Thirty](#)

[MORE FILM REVIEWS AND FEATURES >](#)

[LOCAL STORIES](#) | [OPINIONS](#) | [CALENDAR](#) | [SUBSCRIBE](#) | [ARTS&CULTURE](#) | [MUSIC](#) | [DINING](#) | [FILM](#) | [GUIDES](#) | [N&R EVENTS](#) | [CLASSIFIEDS](#)
[CHICO N&R](#) | [RENO N&R](#) | [SAC N&R](#) | [PRIVACY STATEMENT](#) | [TERMS OF USE](#) | [CONTACT US](#) | [ADVERTISER SERVICES & INFO](#)
COPYRIGHT ©2013 CHICO COMMUNITY PUBLISHING, INC.

36 online

