

Calder Quartet continues to inspire

March 1

Few string quartets can command the stage like the Calder Quartet. At the Kennedy Center Terrace Theater on Sunday afternoon, the California-based ensemble proved why it remains a must-hear on the concert circuit.

Presented by Washington Performing Arts, the Calder waited for absolute silence before delving into composer Andrew Norman's "Sabina," written for the quartet in 2010. The eight-minute composition blossomed out of nothingness into a primordial gob of colors and phrases spun by violinists Benjamin Jacobson and Andrew Bulbrook, violist Jonathan Moerschel and cellist Eric Byers. All four parts eventually coalesced into a vibrant landscape before dissipating into mist.

Calder's hallmarks — watertight ensemble playing with impeccable clarity, intonation and effortless balance, plus a musical interpretation that upholds the composer's intent while plumbing the score's emotional and sonic depths — remained ever present in Leos Janacek's String Quartet No. 2 ("Intimate Letters"). Completed only months before the 74-year-old composer's death, the four-movement work encapsulates Janacek's love for a young woman who served as his muse during his final decade. In the Calder Quartet's hands, the piece unraveled as a biopic of Janacek, told through the lens of an omniscient yet sympathetic musical narrative that was impassioned, witty and cinematic.

Beethoven's String Quartet in E-Flat Major, Op. 127 received a nuanced and cerebral read from the quartet, which indulged in the finale's drama with full-bodied energy. After two curtain calls, the quartet treated listeners to a poignant "O Albion" from Thomas Adès's Arcadiana string quartet.

Here's how the satirists bid farewell to a candidate.

'Simpsons' writer Dan Greaney says that comedy even deserves "the blame" for a serious Trump candidacy.

His family had hosted a party to welcome him home.
