

The Morrison Artists Series presents **ZOFO**, December 7, 3pm in SF State's McKenna Theater. Reserve your seats now! morrison.sfsu.edu.



Music Around the Region

A Morrison Chamber Music Center post from Artistic Director Richard Festinger

As the Morrison Artists Series' artistic director I need to constantly refresh and broaden my awareness of the many great ensembles contributing today to the living tradition of chamber music performance. Call it scouting -- I'm always looking for an opportunity to attend a performance of an ensemble that's been on my radar.



So I found myself at the Calder String Quartet's October 12th performance on the excellent San Jose Chamber Music Society series. Formed at the Colburn School in Los Angeles, this young quartet is enjoying an immense success, and have already had a big presence in the Bay Area, including a recently completed Bartok cycle at the SFJAZZ center this fall. The San Jose concert at the Petit Trianon presented them in colloquy with the consummate pianism of Anne Marie McDermott in Mozart's own chamber arrangement of his Piano Concerto in C Major, K. 415 (1782-3); and violinist Geoff Nuthall of the Saint Lawrence String Quartet joined the five-some in Chausson's Concerto in D

major for violin, piano and string quartet, opus 21 (1891); but it was the Calder's performance of Maurice Ravel's String Quartet in F (1903) that most captured my interest. Dispensing with the usual rounded edges and pastel shades preferred by most quartets, the Calders took full advantage of every opportunity Ravel offered for dramatic contrast, imbuing the music with a provocative boldness and vigor I wouldn't have thought possible.

October 24th found me at the Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts in Davis to hear the top-notch, New York based Daedalus String Quartet in a program featuring some very youthful works, including Mozart's charming first quartet (in G major, K. 80, 1770), Bartok's stunning second quartet (1915-17), and *Molto Adagio* (1938), an early work of George Perle (1915-2009) written while this important American composer was still a student. Bedřich Smetana's *From My Life* completed the evening.



Each November the Music Department at Sacramento State University presents its Festival of New American Music, an ambitious, wide-ranging series of admission free concerts and educational events compressed into a bursting week-and-a-half, and I took the opportunity to hear the first-rate Fidelio Piano Trio from London in a virtuosic performance that included works by the preeminent American composers Charles Wuorinen and John Harbison, as well as music by Elena Ruehr and Evan Ziporyn representing the up-and-coming generation of Americans.

I hope to present all three of these superb ensembles on future Morrison Artists Series programs; and I also hope my readers may be curious to learn about the excellent chamber music offerings of these presenting organizations.

In addition to exploring groups I'm hearing for the first time, it's a great pleasure to follow the successes of ensembles that we've previously presented on the Morrison Artists Series. Last week I was in Boston, and was able to catch a full length performance by the Calyx Piano Trio, who many of you will remember from their Morrison Artists Series concert a year ago. Violinist Cathy French, cellist Jennifer Lucht and pianist Nina Ferrigno just keep getting better and better.

In just three weeks the Morrison Artists Series continues with our special showcase performance by the dazzling four-hand piano duo ZOFO. Eva Maria Zimmerman and Keisuke Nakagoshi are extraordinary keyboard artists, and this outstanding event will be made even more memorable with their World Premiere performance of a newly commissioned work by the eminent, Pulitzer Prize winning American composer William Bolcom. I look forward to seeing you there!



The Morrison Artists Series Presents ZOFO, Sunday, December 7, at 3:00 pm in McKenna Theater, Creative Arts Building, San Francisco State University. Reserve tickets at Morrison.sfsu.edu, or by calling the SF State Box Office at 415.338.2467.