

## WEISS-KAPLAN-NEWMAN TRIO

*"a gem of an ensemble. As individuals, the three are distinguished musicians. Together, they're a team, in the best sense of the word."*

### MUSIC REVIEW: WEISS, KAPLAN, NEWMAN 1

## Three musicians form team that does Beethoven justice

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The journey that pianist Yale Weiss, violinist Mark Kaplan and cellist Clancy Newman planned through all of Beethoven's piano trios began Tuesday evening in Auer Hall, on the second floor of the Simon Music Center, 200 S. Jordan Ave. For them and for the audience gathered it proved quite a trip, one that the ensemble which calls itself the Weiss-Kaplan-Newman Trio will continue and complete in concerts tonight (at 8) and Sunday afternoon (at 4) in Auer.

Tuesday's program focused on beginnings, the three trios that constitute Beethoven's Opus 1. The composer, of course, by then — in the early 1790s — had already written numerous pieces, but he considered the Trios in E-Flat Major (No. 1), G Major (2), and C Minor (3) important enough and good enough to be given that all-important opus designation.

And remarkable pieces they are, absolutely bulging with experimentation, with intricate thematic development, with ideas. Hearing the three trios together made clear how much genius the young Beethoven poured into them, indeed how much concentration it takes just to listen and then mentally imbibe their rich fruits.

That, in turn, aroused wonder for the performers. How could Weiss, Kaplan and Newman master three scores of such complexity and density, much less the six more works they'll play in completion of the cycle?

Well, somehow, they did. Talent is a reason.

Inspiration is a reason. Determination is a reason. Gritty hard work is a reason. Musical understanding is a reason.

When Beethoven composed these pieces, he was himself on the move, starting work while in his birth city, Bonn, and finishing in the city that was to become his home, Vienna. And while they were gestating in his mind and heart, he met and studied with an idol, Haydn, who undoubtedly had at least some impact on the final products.

Hearing these trios also reminded one, almost immediately, that Beethoven, a pianist, was writing them for himself. There is a particular richness in the keyboard line: delicious little turns of phrase, gushes of melodies, knotty technical challenges that, when conquered, exhibit a pianist's prowess. Yael Weiss turned those phrases, gushed those melodies, conquered the challenges with elan and apparent ease.

But it takes three musicians to perform a trio, and these three have, over the years, become increasingly a gem of an ensemble. Mark Kaplan is an accomplished violinist who combines tonal clarity with intensity. Clancy Newman produces pure and lush sounds on his cello. As individuals, the three are distinguished musicians. Together, they're a team, in the best sense of the word.

Their combined efforts rewarded the music in these Opus 1 Trios of Beethoven with honesty of approach and the audience with readings that were beautifully integrated and replete with pleasures.