

Cellist Clancy Newman guest artist on tour in Australia

“a most phenomenally gifted young cellist”

Collaboration soars with sweet sound of friendship

By Graham Strahle • The Australian • March 21, 2012 • Selby and Friends. Elder Hall, Adelaide, March 18.

THE dividends of friendship are manifold in Selby and Friends' first concert for the year. Pianist Kathryn Selby has brought together musicians of exceptional calibre who clearly love playing together.

Born in New York of Australian parentage, Clancy Newman is a most phenomenally gifted young cellist who adapts to chamber music playing like a hand in a glove. Along with a technique that seems to possess no limitations, his playing is unobtrusive, responsive and beautiful.

Equally impressive are violinist Sophie Rowell and Selby herself, both formidably experienced chamber musicians. Together these players form a trio that in every way equals two former groups that Selby has played in: the Macquarie Trio and her recently disbanded Trioz.

But it was also their choice of music that made this concert interesting. The benefit of Newman's knowledge of US composers gave the audience a memorable rarity that almost pushed

Beethoven and Shostakovich into the shade.

Cafe Music (1986), by Michigan composer Paul Schoenfield, is a hugely enjoyable amalgam of popular American influences from blues and ragtime to Broadway. Conceived as background entertainment music in a Minneapolis restaurant at which Schoenfield once served as house pianist, it is nevertheless a sophisticated three movement, sonata-like work that knits together these influences with skill.

Selby and Friends gave it a vivid performance. Their raw, rugged rhythmic power conveyed all its boisterous fun while their delicacy preserved its high art values.

The concert's most wondrous moment was in its rubato middle movement, in which Newman seized its schmaltzy lullaby melody with intoxicating sensuality.

At the opposite end of the scale, Beethoven's "Ghost" Trio was steeped in mystery. This work exerted a bewitching spell, journeying into a strange, eerily



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distant realm in its central largo. The players understood this movement's quasi-operatic quality, while countering this otherworldliness was a superb light-footedness in the work's quicker outer movements.

The group's superlative playing raised three modest Miniatures (1908) by Frank Bridge to greatness and did full justice to Shostakovich's toweringly monumental Piano Trio in E minor, Op 67. Only a slight imbalance, in which the piano out-powered the strings, detracted from the latter.

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