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Violinist, pianist shine in varied program

BY JOHN KRAGLUND
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ALTHOUGH violinist Jovan Kolundzija made his Toronto debut a couple of seasons ago, I cannot recall hearing him prior to last night's appearance for Les Amis Concerts, at Jane Mallett Theatre. It was a wholly agreeable occasion, with a moderately varied program that gave both the violinist and pianist Nada Kolundzija a chance to shine.

The program also featured the premiere of a new Canadian composition that did not make the listener wish it had been omitted — which may be damnation in the minds of

the avant-gardists. It appeared to meet the approval of last night's audience.

The recital opened with Mozart's Sonata No. 6 in G, K 293, a charming two-movement piece that gave the lion's share of the music to the piano. Pianist Kolundzija took full advantage of it in a brilliant, light-fingered and superbly phrased performance of the opening movement, whose only flaw was a tempo too fast for listener appreciation and, more awkwardly for ideal phrasing by the violinist. Even with this liability, it was still a model of ensemble precision. Violinist Kolundzija fared better in the second move-

ment, also an Allegro, but a more moderate one, superbly phrased by both artists.

Any doubts about the violinist's over-all musicianship were dispelled by his interpretation of Bach's unaccompanied Partita No. 2 in D minor, BWV 1004. The only disturbing aspect was an apparent excess of nervous tension in the first couple of movements, projected in uneven sound in the Allemande, and slightly erratic tempos in the Courante. Emotional tension emerged in the beautifully phrased Sarabande and in the crisp clarity of the lively Gigue. And all of his art came impressively together for the cele-

brated challenge of the final Chaconne (the movement whose emotional and technical demands make it one of Bach's most-played violin pieces).

The premiere was of Marjan Mozetich's *Desire at Twilight* (1986), commissioned by Les Amis and described by the composer as "romantic minimalism" and a "kind of reaction to the excess and confusion of much modern and avant-garde music and, to a great extent, the clutter of the modern age." Both artists appeared to be happily attuned to the piece. The piano stressed (quietly) the minimalist aspect of the first part in a

fleet-fingered, modestly changing figure, under the violin's long, romantic line which developed dramatically to a breaking point. This permitted a shift of the minimal figure to the violin, as the piano took up a chorale-like melody. The final section introduced rhythmic contrasts and more frequent shifts (without sacrifice of a lyrical quality) to the accelerando.

The recital ended with Brahms' Sonata No. 1 in G, Op. 78, in a stylish interpretation of great precision that was at its best in the slow movement whose romantic quality was accented by the passionate intensity of the violin part.