

## Entertainment

### Review: Newburgh Chamber Music concert with violinist Oliveira

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NEWBURGH — Elmar Oliveira was the soloist for a Brahms Violin Concerto with the Buffalo Philharmonic on Saturday night, and on Sunday afternoon he was featured at a Mother's Day concert at St. George's Church in the Newburgh Chamber Music Series. The recording artist and prize-winning soloist played in all three pieces in the concert — in a duet, a trio and a quintet — in a program that was as varied as it was challenging. But Oliveira was on familiar ground since he has recorded and played these works around the world. Still, his performance was fresh and invigorating with its meticulous attention to nuances and details and his marvelous ability to make each piece sound new and personal.

"Three Madrigals for Violin and Viola" by Bohuslav Martinu actually was written for the parents of violist Sandra Robbins, who joined Oliveira in performing these three innovative reinterpretations of the traditional choral songs. The two instruments set off in separate directions from the first dramatic statement, with string changes and double-stops leaping back and forth between the two. The mid-madrigal shifts rhythm and harmony, with wavering passages shared by the two in lyric progression, only to have the final movement fast-forward with high violin scales and low viola registers vying for the last musical word. At the last moment they come together for a fireworks finale that dazzled with its virtuosic display.

Antonin Dvorak's "Terzetto for Two Violins and Viola" finds the composer at his most mellow mood, full of Slavonic sweetness and light. Violinist Carole Cowan and violist Valentina Charlap-Evans joined Oliveira in playing the four varied movements that alone contain 10 variations on the theme in the final movement. Smooth and flowing measures mark the opening allegro that builds to an exciting climax and then settles back to a serene coda. Without a pause, the larghetto follows with even more profound serenity, to be replaced by a lively scherzo with pizzicato strings and playful counterpointing. The finale sets the four-note theme on a stunning quest for resolution, with shifts of tone, color and tempo amid dramatic pauses that finally rush headlong into a resonant recapitulation.

After intermission, Johannes Brahms' String Quintet in G major brought all the strings together with cellist Susan Seligman. Brahms planned this as his last work of music (it was not), and he poured into it the range and mastery of his genius. From the opening allegro with its tremolo upper strings allowing the cello to introduce the main theme, the players wove a texture of wonder and imagination, with a three-note Viennese waltz setting the pace that fades and reappears for a glorious close. The adagio develops a single melody that is pure and pensive while increasing in volume and intensity to yield to a calm closure. After a lively scherzo minuet, the final vivace turns from waltz tunes to Gypsy dances for a mix of Hungarian dances that rise to a string-inspired review of all the shining themes.