

Santa Barbara Music Club Delights Faulkner Audience

A delightful array of distinct performances may have been an unusual choice, but it was pitch perfect

By [Margo Kline](#), Noozhawk Contributor | Published on 03.23.2009

Sometimes the best things in life really are free; witness the [Santa Barbara Music Club's](#) matinee concert Saturday at the [Santa Barbara Central Library's Faulkner Gallery](#). These free concerts are a music club staple, to the great benefit of the community's lovers of fine music. Chairs are set up in the Faulkner, the grand piano is rolled into place and wonderful things happen.

Saturday's program featured a splendid young pianist, David Sedgwick, vibrant soprano Takako Wakita and the Channel Islands String Quartet in a performance of a seldom-heard work by [Zoltan Kodaly](#). The quartet was last on the bill, but earned an especially delighted response from the audience. This was chamber music played as it should be, in an intimate room with sympathetic acoustics, before musically sophisticated listeners.

The Channel Islands String Quartet is comprised of two educators from [California State University Channel Islands](#), a retired vice chancellor of the [Los Angeles Community College District](#), and cellist [Ervin Klinkon](#), who lives in Santa Barbara. He performs with several ensembles and teaches cello and coaches chamber music.

The other members are first violinist [Irving Weinstein](#), the retired vice chancellor; second violinist [Ted Lucas](#), assistant to the executive vice chancellor at CSUCI; and violist [Diana Ray-Goodman](#), a faculty member at [CSUCI](#) and [Moorpark College](#) who also maintains a private cello and violin studio in Thousand Oaks.

These four somehow find the time to rehearse and play in fine fashion, exemplified by Saturday's reading of the "Kodaly Quartet No. 2, Opus 10." Lucas gave a brief introduction of the work, explaining that the composer traveled his native Hungary early in the 20th century with primitive audio equipment, recording bird sounds and peasants singing and talking, all of which inspired the two-movement quartet. Lucas also related that Weinstein actually studied with Kodaly in his youth.

The Kodaly is "modern," which is to say somewhat dissonant, with sharp rhythmic juxtapositions. Lucas' introduction added to appreciation of the piece; nightingales sang and hints of Gypsy violins were heard. The audience responded with enthusiastic applause when it ended.

The program opened with Sedgwick performing five improvisations by [Francois Poulenc](#) and [Edward McDowell's](#) "Witches Dance, Opus 17, No. 2." Sedgwick is a music club scholarship winner, and is a freshman trumpet major at [UCLA](#), playing trumpet with the University Symphony, Brass Ensemble and Contemporary Jazz Ensemble.

He is also a technical master at the concert grand, rippling through Poulenc's mood pieces and "Witches Dance" with skill and sensitivity. It will be interesting to follow his career, considering his gifts both as a trumpet player and pianist.

Soprano Takako Wakita filled out the program with solos by [Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart](#), [Francesco Paolo Tosti](#), [Benedetto Marcello](#) and [George Gershwin](#). Her accompanist was the piano virtuoso and pedagogue Betty Oberacker, who read each lyric before Wakita sang it.

The two Mozart works were "Das Veilchen," K. 476 and "Oiseaux, si tous les ans," K. 307, both well-suited to Wakita's delicate soprano. Neither the Tosti nor the Marcello was familiar to the reviewer, but again seemed to fit Wakita's voice well.

George Gershwin's "By Strauss" was a complete change-up and a crowd-pleaser. Oberacker's reading of the lyric was charming and funny, playing to [Ira Gershwin's](#) witty rhymes ("souses" and "Strauss's"). Wakita's heavily-accented English gave additional oomph to the sung version

Whoever put together this off-beat program was inspired. It's rare, to say the least, finding Mozart, Poulenc, Gershwin and Kodaly on the same bill. It worked like a charm.

— *Margo Kline covers the arts as a [Noozhawk](#) contributor.*