French quartet impress in challenging program

QUatuOR VIA NOVA
Performing Schubert, Ligeti, and Ravel.
Alumni Auditorium,
Northeastern University.
Tuesday, October 20th, at 8 pm.

BY DAVID SASLAV

THE INTERNATIONAL RENOWNED, multiple award-winning string quartet, Quatuor Via Nova performed with great distinction last Tuesday night at Northeastern. Their music-making was not only exceptional, but also, at times, almost distracted at times, his face carrying a pained expression throughout the evening. But Cellist Jean-Marie Gamard's performance was consistently sound.

The first two movements of Schubert's "Rosamonde" quartet to a 20th century work by Györgi Ligeti, then on to Ravel) were equally brilliant. The transitions from Schubert's "Rosamonde" quartet to a 20th century work by Györgi Ligeti, then on to Ravel) were equally brilliant.

Particularly engrossing was an extended passage in which all four instruments simultaneously produced high string harmonics on different strings; suddenly, individual voices would break away to investigate further the work's principal four tone row, then return to the group in preparation for another instrument's departure. Two-voice slides, detuned unison, and muted string passages combined to make this a memorable work, memorably performed.

But beyond a doubt, the highlight of the evening was the group's rendition of Ravel's F Major String Quartet. The idiomatic French departure of Ravel's hand was sprinkled with savoy subtlety. The post-romantic harmonies and dynamic swells were performed intimately, faithfully, and with a foodiness born of mastery. Violin Claude Navone and second violist Jean-Pierre Souberot deserve special praise for their unorthodox yet rich interplay with the outer voices.

The group's performance was so appreciated by the audience that on fourth encore they provided an encore: the "Molto Allegro" from Mozart's K. 387 Quartet. The quartet took this lively, offbeat movement to wondrous heights, spurring us to please the noisy sparse crowd who showed up for the concert.

Quatuor Via Nova won the Grand Prix du Disque Francophone in 1975 for its recording of Mozart's "Haydn" quartets, and the standing ovation which followed the encore was indication enough that the quartet would be more than welcome back in Boston with an all-Mozart concert.

Unimaginative and shallow story line compensated by performances

NO MAN'S LAND
Directed by Peter Werner.
Starring Charlie Sheen, D.B. Sweeney, and Lara Harris.

By RICARDO RODRIGUEZ

WHEN I FIRST LEARNED of No Man's Land, I figured the film was just an excuse to get Charlie Sheen on screen while he was still hot. Though that's probably the case, No Man's Land is nonetheless an entertaining film, if nothing else.

Charlie Sheen plays Ted Varrick, a 22-year-old who has made a rather profitable business out of stealing Porsches. D.B. Sweeney (the young soldier in Gardens of Stone) is Benji Taylor (no joke), a grunge "mason and apple pie" cop on the police force. Taylor is given an undercover assignment as a mechanic in Varrick's auto shop, with the purpose of gaining evidence to prove that Varrick killed a policeman.

As first Taylor can't believe that Varrick could kill anything, especially not a cop. But Taylor's judgement becomes increasingly blurred as he attends more parties, steals more cars, and in general begins to lose his assignment as a mechanic in Varrick's auto shop, with the purpose of gaining evidence to prove that Varrick killed a policeman.

The biggest mistake the film makes, however, is not utilizing Randy Quaid (playing Taylor's superior) to the fullest. Quaid's character is left grossly underdeveloped.

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