

Aiman Mussakhajayeva, violin
Pavel Gililov, piano
 Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall
 March 23, 2005

An old-fashioned virtuoso violinist's recital, replete with virtuoso piano assistance, was given for the delectation of audiences at Carnegie's newest spin-off, "Judy and Arthur Zankel Hall", on the snowy evening of March 23rd. The protagonists were Aiman Mussakhajayeva, people's artist of the Republic of Kazakhstan and graduate of the Tchaikovsky State Conservatory from the Class of Valery Klimov, and Ukrainian pianist, Pavel Gililov, a former protégé of Dmitri Kabalevsky and soloist in his own right (he was a prizewinner at the 1975 Warsaw Chopin Competition and also the 1978 Vilotti Piano Competition in Vercelli). Their playing was highly spiced, and if this writer at times took emphatic interpretative reservation, the dazzling technical command and colorful character often made for an exciting evening of fireworks.

The Tartini Sonata in G Minor, "Devil's Trill", began the program in a version which might well have been the familiar Kreisler arrangement, but as Mussakhajayeva and Gililov recreated it, it couldn't have sounded more different than what most of us are today accustomed to hearing from (say) David Oistrakh's silken tone and massive style: Conversely, this account had a plucky "go-for-it" scherzando quality that was more reminiscent of Szigetti, Hubermann or Ivry Gitlis, and the mercurial but assertive keyboard support furthered the impression with a lot of color.

The Brahms Sonata in D Minor, Op. 108 was often quite rapid in tempo, which added to forward flow, but with such loosened rhythms and sometimes extravagantly rubato phrasing,

I suppose that many purists might have taken umbrage on hearing the "Traditional" bearded Brahms a la Russe. But with such ease and spontaneity, this writer was quite prepared to wave objection. I especially liked the way pianist Gililov made light of the downward cascading runs in the *Un poco e con sentimento* third movement.

The Franck Sonata in A Major offered more of the same approach heard in the Brahms, and here it worked out even more satisfactorily. Rhythmically, it may have been all over the place; still, the color and cogency of the unconventionally shaped phrases had an innate elegance of its own, and the second movement with its hair raising synchronized final *accelerando* was a particularly bright moment. The canonic *Finale*, too, left a glowing final memory.

Even better was the Saint Saens Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso, which whizzed by in what was undoubtedly the fastest, most airborne rendering I have recalled encountering (and I have encountered many of this ubiquitous crowd pleaser; the pianist—I repeat—made as noteworthy a contribution as the fiddler).

The potpourri from Bizet's "Carmen" was thrillingly played in the Franz Waxman confection (once championed by Heifetz), rather than in the more usual "easier" Sarasate version. I have come to prefer it to the Sarasate, and all the more so when it was so fearlessly transcended as it was here.

The audience response demanded, and received, two generous encores. First, there was a long medley of Gershwin favorites (as I have observed, the Russian soul evidently loves its Brooklyn boy of Russian-Jewish ancestry as fervently as Native Americans do). This was followed by a loving account of Elgar's *Salute d'amour*.

—Harris Goldsmith

Louise Dubin, Cello
 Barge Music
 June 18, 2005

Barge Music has been a quiet, ongoing part of New York's musical life for a goodly number of years. The Barge, located at the Fulton Street Ferry Landing right under the Brooklyn side of the Brooklyn Bridge, presents chamber music concerts on deck, allowing music lovers to combine the pleasures of classical music with a softened version of rock and roll (from the swaying motion of the boat on the East River!). Usually at a reasonable cost, the Barge Music has recently inaugurated a series of informal free concerts at the time of 1:00P.M. before the standard events later in the afternoon or at 8:00P.M.

One such of these "freebies" last June 18 was brought to my attention since it featured Louise Dubin, a cellist who has made a name for herself in solo, orchestral and chamber music playing. Ms. Dubin earned her bachelor's degree in English Literature from Columbia, where she was awarded both the university's Dolan Prize for Music Studies and the Bennett Cerf Prize for critical writing. She studied the cello concurrently at Juilliard as a full scholarship student of Aldo Parisot. She received her master's degree from the Mannes College of Music as a pupil of Timothy Eddy. Her formal cello studies have culminated with Janos Starker at the Indiana University School of Music, where she received the Eva Janzer scholarship and is currently completing a doctoral degree in music. (Her other Cello teachers include

Ralpa Kirshbaum, William Oleeth and Steven Isserlis in their classes at Aldeburgh and Prussia Cove, England. She also performed at the Orford Festival in Canada, where she was a prize winner in the Orford Arts Center International Music Competition.

Ms. Dubin's June 18th stint featured artistically refined, affectionately shaped performances of Bach's Suite No. 2 in D Minor BWV 1008 and also the first two movements, *Langsam* and *Massig*, of Hindemith's Sonata for Solo Cello Op. 25, No. 3. Her tone was smooth and compact; her intonation true-to-the-mark; and her phrasing was airborne and veering to lyrical understatement reflecting the patrician interpretative style one might have well expected from Starker, Parisot and Eddy (Ms. Dubin's illustrious mentors). She is a superior instrumentalist and, obviously, an intelligent, tasteful musician. She made a very fine impression.

There was no printed program for this special Barge Music concert, aside from the previous flyer for Ms. Dubin's appearance plus her bio. But as a bonus, we heard some unaccompanied Bach (the Bourree from the E Major Unaccompanied Violin Partita) played with earnest sincerity (albeit less-than-polished technique) from Olga Bloom, the guiding spirit of Barge Music. And also a suitably taut, intense performance of Brahms's Trio No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 101 (a spiritual sibling to the same composer's Double Concerto in A Minor, Op. 102 for Violin and Cello) as played by three young musicians unidentified by the non-existent program. But, of course, this was Ms. Dubin's show.

—Harris Goldsmith