

CONCERT REVIEW

Parisii Quartet gives 'illuminating' performance

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WELL ON their way to entering the topmost echelon of the professional quartet playing fraternity, the Parisii Quartet was heard in a lyrically lovely concert last Thursday night, playing under the auspices of the Chamber Music Society of the Monterey Peninsula in Carmel's Sunset Cultural Center auditorium.

Four prize-winning graduates of the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Paris created the group in 1984, but they play like seasoned veterans of vastly greater knowledge and experience. They are all individually impressive instrumentalists who blend their talents in a forthright, yet balanced manner with no false sense of subordination or modesty.

Such ability!

Violinists Thierry Brodard and Jean-Michel Berrette compliment each other's tone, with Brodard giving a virtuoso sheen to his instrument's upper register while Berrette's unusually deep and mellow sound brings greatly deserved importance to the second violin line.

Violist Dominique Lobet has great presence and distinction in his playing and displays a richness and depth of tone more often expected from a cello. Cellist Jean-Philippe Martignoni has a fine sense of individuality and obvious enjoyment of his music, combined with an easy and impressive command of his instrument.

When such ability is put at the service of a great masterpiece, the results are indeed treasurable. The Schubert *Quartet in G Major* Op. 161 was written in

10 days and was the composer's 15th and last work in this genre. It is seldom performed due to the demands it puts on the players' musicianship and physical endurance.

As the work began, there was tension and a certain amount of inhibition in the playing, but before too long, the group found its focus and the interpretation blossomed into beauty. The tone was pure and elegant and the projection of content grew in excitement as it progressed. The contrasts of soft fragility and passionate fortes were excellently brought forth.

In the Andante, the cellist is the hero and Martignoni's lyric approach, refined tone and musical awareness made him a fine protagonist. The Scherzo was a delightful jewel, sparkling lightly. Here the players were less restrained in capturing the humor and humanity of the music.

The Finale was a playful Tarantella and again the cellist excelled, throwing himself into the strong rhythmic impetus with marked verve and flexibility. There was electricity and brilliance in the interpretation and it made a powerful impression on the audience.

Ravel's *Quartet in F Major* was a similarly successful venture. It is another virtuoso work, and the Parisii met its challenges in superior style. Each movement rose to heights of thrilling vitality, but also included passages of transparent fragility. It was an illuminating performance.