

We meet by chance... with violinist, Desirée Ruhstrat and 'cellist, David Cunliffe after their performance with Fandango in Largo, FL. I met David and Desirée when they performed in August at the Pierce Hill Performing Arts Chamber Music Festival in the Driftless. How nice to hear their artistry again, in fair weather conditions that prevail when you follow the sun. Fandango is a loaded label for this group. Defined as "an animated Spanish dance in triple time, the animated reference clearly describes the performance that was presented yesterday afternoon at the Art for Faith's Sake Concert Series in Largo, FL. The reference to dance also comes to mind as the performance, Desiree Ruhstrat on violin, Eugenia Moliner, flutes, Denis Azabagic, guitar, and David Cunliffe, 'cello, "danced" together through the program as pairs, trios, and a quartet, per the orchestration of the piece. They choose their partners well in this diverse program of arrangements of Vivaldi's Winter from The Four Seasons, and Boccherini's Quintet for Guitar and Strings in D major, that book- ended the concert. The Boccherini was highlighted by Cunliffe's re-enactment of what was probably Boccherini's "life of the party" moment with all kinds of lively effects on the instrument. (This may have been the passage that the composer declined to change at King Charles the III of Spain request that resulted in his dismissal!) Moliner on flute and Azabagic on guitar were absolutely locked together in a hypnotic sensuous dance performing Piazzolla's Café 1930. The rich resonance of Moliner's flute penetrating the full register of her instrument, and in the passages when she turned to Azabagic (her husband) and intoned notes into the body of the guitar, it brought to mind the concept of "Duende" to my mind. You know, Lorca's reference to a magical power of the soul. Azabagic responded with a sensitive arpeggiation of chords in his own, distinct poetic terms. Ruhstrat joined them on La Calle, apparently, Piazzolla's reference to the street he once lived on in NYC. She, brought an edginess of the night feel to this piece with her incredible voice like effects and dramatic dynamic range. This group will be dancing in my mind for months to come. I look forward to sharing their CD with WDRT Symphony Sunday listeners in the months to come!

William Neil, WDRT Symphony Sunday