



## UAPRESENTS STUDENT CRITIC PROGRAM

### **Menahem Pressler and the New York Chamber Soloists with Richard Stoltzman**

Review by Cristina Figueroa

Menahem Pressler and Richard Stoltzman, accompanied by the New York Chamber Soloists, performed three beautiful soloist classical music pieces for piano and clarinet at the University of Arizona's Centennial Hall. The first piece was a lovely Mozart piano solo piece performed by Menahem Pressler, the second was another Mozart soloist piece for clarinet performed by Richard Stoltzman, and the last was a Brahms duet with both musicians. Both are well known around the world and award winning musicians that have been in the music industry for over 50 years. The New York Chamber Soloists are a popular classical music band that performs all over the nation, and are much like a proper symphony orchestra but much smaller, the cream of the crop of their musical group.

Most of the audience was elderly and were all very calm throughout the whole performance. During the first performance, the piano solo piece, the audience was fully mesmerized and completely focused on the smooth, yet exciting piano solos. After the intermission, once Richard Stoltzman started off the second piece with a clarinet solo, the audience was not as focused or interested, due to the fact that clarinet is rarely ever seen or noticed as a solo instrument, let alone in most classical music pieces. During long pauses in the music, the audience would seize the opportunity to move around, readjust their seat, or even leave. Once Pressler and his piano were back up on stage for a duet with Stoltzman and his clarinet, the audience had gained a bit more focus. Due to piano being such a mainstream and universal instrument especially in classical music, it is difficult for audiences to find an appreciation for more uncommon, classical piece instruments.

These musicians definitely gave themselves quite a challenge and met their goals. The dynamics were outstanding (although expected from a professional band) and to my surprise, some instruments that normally almost never project sound filled the room with their beauty, such as the french horn and Stoltzman's clarinet. He did not even need a microphone! Although his hopes of conveying a spiritual mood to the audience through the clarinet were not fulfilled, he did a fine job nonetheless. Pressler was the most fascinating, as his fingers flowed through the piano keys so gracefully. I could imagine beautiful fields filled with butterflies or a dark, rainy day in the city, yet it was still lovely, as he flowed through every articulate note. The New York Chamber Soloists created a wonderful background atmosphere for the star musicians. They would play the music in a way as if they were communicating with the soloists through the instruments, creating a pattern of emotions and connection as they'd go back and forth as they'd each play. The musicians in the background also showed their enthusiasm in the performance, having fun with the music by swaying, feeling the music flow through them as they performed. Their excitement and anticipation to play gave positive vibes off to the audience.

Calming, energetic, and giving a new perspective on instrumental music, Menahem Pressler and Richard Stoltzman brought a different feel to classical music. Along with the New York Chamber Soloists, they hollowed brain cavities as well as filled them with colorful thoughts and depictions. Much like a therapy session, yet it was still enticing. I was able to clear my mind of all my thoughts and troubles, sit back in my chair and relax, yet I was also able to lean forward in my chair, anticipating what was next to come in every solo. What a superb choice, picking Mozart. Admittedly not my favorite music composer, but an excellent choice to clear people's minds and fill them with nostalgic memories, or just make them feel at ease.