



UAPRESENTS STUDENT CRITIC PROGRAM

Menahem Pressler and the New York Chamber Soloists with Richard Stoltzman

Review by Santos Flores

Menahem Pressler and the New York Chamber Soloists with Richard Stoltzman performed on the twenty-first of November 2010. The moon was full, the night air was crisp and cool, and many faces were painted with anticipation. The night began with a tasteful insight to the rhyme and reason behind the music to be played, conversations were sweet and smiles aluminous, as I saw people of various ages eagerly await the call to take their seats.

Beneath diming lights grim silence fell upon the audience, Menahem Pressler with microphone in hand stood at the edge of the stage and shared a story of a past show. Then the room took on a whole new color, one of warmth dare I say.

Ivory keys jolted miniature felt tipped hammers and tightened strings sang; Menahem Pressler lead the intro with fingers as swift as winds barreling over grassy hills. Then fine wooden time capsules from the past pressed against shoulders, knees, and torsos as the New York Chamber Soloists followed the high pinched voice of the piano; emphasizing and empowering the already riveting music that flowed like water down the surrounding walls of Centennial Hall.

I believe Pressler's musical notes both stunned and enlightened a lot of emotions within the crowd and even the performers themselves. In 1939 Menahem Pressler fled Nazi Germany and immigrated to Israel at the age of sixteen. Seven short years later, in 1946, he won first prize in the Debussy International Piano Competition in San Francisco. Now over fifty years later Menahem Pressler still renders audiences around the world breath taken; anyone who recognizes a truly incredible musician must speak the name of Menahem Pressler.

To have seen Menahem Pressler perform live was an everlasting experience that I will never forget.