

## KINGSTON MUSIC FESTIVAL

# Dramatic, daring performance from Kaminska

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There was a special treat for fans of the Kingston Chamber Music Festival Monday night, a Polish accordion player named Lidia Kaminska.

**REVIEW** | An accordion player, you say?

Yes, but this was no run through of "Lady of Spain." Kaminska brought with her a program of classics, with one exception. Most of what she played was arrangements of piano and organ pieces by Scarlatti, Liszt and Bach. But there was one contemporary piece written for her instrument, a rambling score called *Spanish Rhapsody* by Vladislav Zolotarev that allowed Kaminska to show off

some of the colors of her accordion. It opened with a sort of low growl, and contained lots of scale passages and runs up and down the keyboard.

That was followed by a faithful transcription of the Paganini/Liszt piano etude known as *La Chasse*, with difficult leaping chords. A Scarlatti sonata in E Major sparkled with its intricate passagework. But the highlight of evening had to have been Kaminska's rendition of Bach's popular organ Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, which brought the house down. She not only managed to squeeze in all the notes, even the pedal parts in the fugue, but played with

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great flair.

There was drama in the opening statement, one of the most famous in all of classical music, and a kind of improvisatorial feel to much of the Toccata, which gave it a lot of freshness. And in the fugue, which chugged along at a fairly brisk pace, there were nice contrasts in dynamics as she played repeated passages like an echo.

The finale of the fugue was daring, a kind of all-or-nothing proposition.

Kaminska then returned to the stage with a bandoneon, a smaller accordion popular in South America. At that point she was joined by a string quartet for music of Astor Piazzolla, two *Tango Sensations* entitled "Fear" and "Anxiety." This was not nearly so virtuosic as her solo offerings, but it provided some interesting moments with pieces that tended to have sharp, halting melodies.

The rest of the night was given over to more traditional fare, Beethoven's duo for viola and cello known as the *Eyeglasses*, and the lovely

Schumann Piano Quartet, with festival director Natalie Zhu at the keyboard.

The Beethoven made a nice program opener, and contained some beautiful duet work from violist Burchard Tang and cellist Efe Baltacigil. But it was the Schumann that stuck in the memory. This was a wonderfully clean, classical performance of the score, with crisp, focused playing by Zhu, who just happens to be eight months pregnant.

The piece opened with a nice sense of mystery, then progressed at a fairly leisurely pace. That all changed with the Scherzo, which bubbled along. But the nicest playing came in the slow movement, where cellist Priscilla Lee demonstrated her warm, lush tone. Violinist Jose Blumenschein added the sweetness that made the section sing.

*The Kingston Festival runs through Friday at URI's Fine Arts Center. Call (401) 789-0665.*

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The highlight of the evening was Lidia Kaminska's rendition of Bach's popular organ Toccata and Fugue in D Minor.