

New York Chamber Soloists, Kasman Duo Team up for Sparking Concert

By Phillip Ratliff

An eight-musician contingent from the New York Chamber Soloists teamed up with the father-daughter duo-piano team of Yakov and Aleksandra Kasman Sunday to perform a sparkling concert of classical gems.

Though every performer glistened at Brock Recital Hall, 15-year-old Aleksandra Kasman surely was the most dazzling by virtue of her age. The Vestavia Hills High School junior has racked up an impressive array of piano competition prizes, while still finding time to serve as vice president of her high school French Club. Her success surely owes to her training under her father and, earlier in her studies, her mother, Tatiana Kasman.



But pedigree goes only so far. Natural talent must also be a part of the mix, and the young pianist has plenty to spare. Her playing in the upper part of Franz Schubert's Fantasia in F minor, for piano, four hands, made this fact apparent. Precise, nuanced and confident, her sensitivity, especially to the demands of ensemble playing, was abundant.



In the closing number, Camille Saint-Saens' "Carnival of the Animals," Aleksandra Kasman would take her talent for ensemble playing to a more demanding context. Performing with seven of the eight brilliant instrumentalists of the New York Chamber Soloists, both Kasmans played from memory in a duo piano format, a first in NYCS Artistic Director Melvin Kaplan's experience, he noted.

Aleksandra and her dad had plenty of help. Tomoya Aomori did an admirable job covering glockenspiel and xylophone parts when called upon. Flutist Jennifer Grim and cellist Adam Grabois turned in top notch solo work. With ensemble playing this flawless, all share some credit.

New York Chamber Soloists
Yakov and Aleksandra Kasman

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Brock Recital Hall
Sunday
Presented by Birmingham Chamber Music Society