Duo Affinité has their way with trumpet, piano and bassoon: Steals the ears and hearts of audience

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People are going to be talking about this concert for a long time! I'm referring to this season's first offering by the South Okanagan Concert Society in their four-concert series each year. On October 30th, they presented Duo Affinité, two superb Canadian musicians whose show and tell was completely engaging from the moment they walked on stage.

Nadina Mackie Jackson waltzes with her bassoon, perhaps hoping that her high leather boots don't get tangled in her peacock feather train. Guy Few accompanies her on one of three different trumpets or piano, or both—sometimes at the same time! As flashy as his playing is his own outfit—open shirt with a silver necklace/tie and black silk suit. Did I mention Nadina has blue tinted hair? Yes.

But that's part of the "show," although the music is the real item here. The "tell" is also a major part of this show, as this couple could only stop talking about what they love to play when they were actually playing it.

Informal was the mode, but informative was the message. Engaging bits of personal history (she's from Burns Lake, he's from Saskatchewan), bits about some of their instruments (trumpeters originally came in packs, but bassoonists tramped the countryside with their bassoon over their back on a stick), bits about composer friends and composers from the history books; little bits of kibitzing back and forth; lots of digs and fun stuff, on and on. In fact, it was much like having two talented friends in your living room just putting on a show and carrying on—musically. They were Nadina and Guy from word one, and they were having great fun, and so were we.

The music was something else as well. I mean, bassoon and trumpet/piano?? Yes, indeed. These two are musicians of such skill that what they're doing up there is virtuosic. In making such fine music, they transported their audience to eighteenth century Italy with the rapturous Paganini opener, and to elegant baroque French court music by de Boismortier that you'd like to have playing on your own private barge as you drift down a river through the French countryside—or something. There was another sonata by Paganini that invoked the Italian street music that a Fellini film might use. They introduced us to music that's unfamiliar, and made it delightful, joyful, or by turns either jarring or plaintive as in one of the Canadian pieces by their friend Mathieu Lussier. Some was played at a breakneck gallop, others exploring the depths or brilliances of their instruments. There was some familiar Bach and Beethoven, but presented by bassoon and corno da caccia (originally a hunting horn) or piano accompaniment, we heard them in an unfamiliar way, yet beautiful, or one could say, glorious.

I think the piece the audience was most taken with, though, was the tango "Oblivion" by that greatest Argentine composer of tangos, Astor Piazzolla. Guy introduced it as music born out of deep depression where you had only two alternatives, either to dance or to cry. Ah, yes. Moving stuff.

There was much more—a fascinating and joyous concert in all. So thank you to the SOCS for such a splendid opener.

The remaining three concerts are ones to look forward to, and the last one with the Vancouver Chamber Choir is an absolute coup! Congratulations for this outstanding programming for music lovers in our town. And none of it would be possible without the generous assistance of sponsors who deserve mention here, and for last Friday's concert in particular: Burrowing Owl Estate Winery, Fortis BC Inc., Kiwanis Club of Oliver, and Maria Gonzalez-Richer, Denturist. Thank you for a marvellous evening.