

FROM THE BOSTON HERALD

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Thomas, Lee and Frautschi dazzle at Longy

By T.J. Medrek

The Boston Chamber Music Society made it seem as easy as one, two, three at last night's concert at the Longy School of Music in Cambridge. This third of the Society's four annual Saturday-in-August chamber music programs started off with a solo, continued with a duet and finished with a trio, all to the delight of the audience that packed Longy's Pickman Hall.

The opening act had BCMS artistic director Ronald Thomas delivering a deeply personal account of Bach's E-flat Major Suite for Solo Cello. Really, this was very macho Bach: elegant, to be sure, but also muscular and propulsive (even, on occasion, to the point of forgivable roughness). This lent a particularly dashing eloquence to the melancholy-tinged music that I found utterly absorbing.

No sooner did Thomas leave the stage than violinist Jennifer Frautschi bounded onto it, followed by pianist Mihae Lee. The fabulous Frautschi is one of our most fully gifted musical artists, and she filled the long, longing phrases of Faure's passionate A Major Violin Sonata with dazzling intensity. Lee's sure, supple piano may have remained solidly in the background for the most part. But in the sonata's friskier passages Lee and Frautschi played off of each other with kittenish joy.

After intermission, their duet became a trio as Thomas reappeared to join Lee and Frautschi for Dvorak's fundamentally rambunctious F Minor Piano Trio. Frautschi and Thomas demonstrated remarkably congenial styles, as if they'd been playing - exquisitely - together forever. Yet this time, with no little help from the composer, it was Lee's confident command that dominated the proceedings.