

De Morgen, Brussels
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**Still a Rising Star Seven Years after the Queen Elisabeth Competition:
Jennifer Frautschi's Got It**

The American made an impression with seamless, almost perfect violin playing and tasteful rhetoric

By Rudy Tambuyser

One of the series that run every season on Sunday mornings at the BOZAR is the Rising Stars. This project featuring promising artists is organized by ECHO, the European Concert Hall Organization, in cooperation with Carnegie Hall in New York. Each of the concert halls nominates one young virtuoso who then plays each of the great stages. Sunday we got to hear the American violinist Jennifer Frautschi, the Carnegie Hall candidate. It is a little surprising that she still runs under that charming sobriquet, since the young lady was one of the winners of the Queen Elisabeth Competition in 1997 and has the kind of unflappable and focused manner that only people with a lot of stage experience possess.

Her program was explicitly modern: Janacek (Sonata) and Stravinsky (Divertimento) represented the classical twentieth century, and Oliver Knussen (Secret Psalm) and Steven Mackey (Sonata) provided the newer, and therefore still apocryphal works. For the most part it was beautiful and balanced, except for the sonata by Mackey: the contents of the otherwise quite witty work cannot fulfill the high expectations that the title suggests. The highly syncopated rhythms swing well, but they are miles apart from the lovely land called Originality.

Janacek may rightfully speak of a sonata – well-wrought, architecturally significant. Stravinsky knew why he called his genius work only a divertimento. Secret Psalm for violin solo by the composer and conductor Knussen seemed like a fine interlude: delicate, unnecessary in a pleasant way and well made.

Jennifer Frautschi made an impression with seamless, almost perfect violin playing and tasteful rhetoric, which certainly has to do with her understanding of and her affinity with the works she plays. The Stravinsky is less serious, but rare is the violinist who knows how to do justice both to the lightness in execution that the work demands and its technical problems. She's got it, that much is certain.

WHO Jennifer Frautschi and John Blacklow
WHAT Works for violin and piano by Janacek, Knussen, Mackey and Stravinsky
WHERE AND WHEN Sunday, April 25, at the BOZAR in Brussels

Translation from Dutch: Alexa Nieschlag