

Entertainment Highlights: Camerata New England Performs Brahms



Camerata New England musicians Peter Sulski, Linda Galvan, Evelyn Zuckerman and Omar Chen Guey are among those who will perform an all Brahms program this weekend. (Courtesy photograph)

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If you only know Johannes Brahms for his lullaby, don't plan to nap while Camerata New England performs the 19th-century composer's Piano Quartet Opus 26 in A Major and — especially — his String Quintet Opus 111 in G Major on Sunday afternoon at Lebanon's Sacred Heart Church.

“Even though they're both Brahms, they're both very different,” Camerata's principal cellist Linda Galvan said this week from her home in Thetford. “He wrote the quartet when he was younger (early 1860s), so it's a little more lighthearted. The quintet (from 1890, also known as the Prater Quintet) is very emotionally intense.”

How intense, Galvan started to appreciate while listening to recordings of the quintet and then rehearsing them with Camerata violists Peter Sulski and Mark Berger and violinists Omar Chen Guey and Andrew Eng.

“I’d played the piano quartet with a faculty ensemble (while teaching cello at British Columbia’s University of Victoria), but I’d never tried the string quintet,” Galvan recalled. “It’s an amazing work. Very difficult. I’m glad that most of the others have performed it.”

Sulski and Berger teach music at Clark University in Worcester, Mass., in addition to performing with various ensembles, while the Brazilian Guey performs, records and teaches around the world and Eng teaches and coaches young musicians in the Boston area as well as performing both as a soloist and with a variety of chamber groups.

“They’re wonderful players,” Galvan said. “With their schedules it’s hard to rehearse very often before these concerts, but when we do, we have such a good time.”

In the earlier piano quartet — which the ensemble also will perform along with the string quintet on Saturday afternoon at 3 at the Tillotson Center for the Arts in Colebrook, N.H. — Camerata veteran keyboardist and teacher Evelyn Zuckerman of Hartford will play the piano, and set the stage.

“Evelyn does the talking at the concerts,” Galvan concluded. “She gives the background, talks about the elements of the piece.”

Camerata New England will perform two works of Johannes Brahms at Lebanon’s Sacred Heart Church on Sunday afternoon at 3, during the opening weekend of its series of chamber-music concerts. Tickets for the individual concert cost \$28, and entitle the buyer to a free ticket for a child 18 or younger. Season tickets covering four Upper Valley concerts are \$100, and the purchase of a season ticket entitles the buyer to a free season ticket for a child. On Nov. 7 at the Norwich Congregational Church, Camerata will perform piano trios by Fanny Mendelssohn and Clara Schumann. To learn more, visit cameratanewengland.org.