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The group that keeps on giving: ALIAS

Posted by Chrissy

In a world stereotypically populated by “starving artists,” the ALIAS chamber ensemble is thriving in every way imaginable. While major American orchestras are going through [severe financial difficulties](#), and even as the [Nashville Symphony](#) (which employs several ALIAS members) continues its journey on the long, hard road of post-flood recovery, these amazing musicians set aside precious time in their jam-packed schedules to use their music to give back to their community. Since they all have “day jobs,” either playing in the Symphony or teaching at a local university, the group donates 100% of its concert proceeds to such organizations as [Hands On Nashville](#), [Big Brothers Big Sisters of Middle Tennessee](#), and the [Oasis Center](#).

Last Friday’s ALIAS concert featured “Hilos,” a commission by composer [Gabriela Lena Frank](#) which the group recorded earlier this year for an upcoming Naxos CD. Several folks from our office were in attendance; here’s a sampling of their reactions:

What a wonderful concert! From beginning to end it was interesting, well programmed, and beautifully performed. Hearing *Hilos* for the first time was very special to me, having been involved in the project since it was brought to Naxos. I loved that I could hear the friendship and intimacy of the players through their performance. The composer’s depth of character ***and*** her sense of humor shone throughout, and the playing was exceptional both on an emotional and technical level. I am so very excited about the release of this CD! - Lea Maitlen, Senior Marketing Manager

As ironic as it may sound, it is rare for me to listen to my own instrument, the clarinet. Usually, I am turned off by the bright sound and struggle to find a well-rounded player. So, when I say that the Alias Ensemble concert was incredible, I mean it in a special way. Lee Levine (who actually came up with the name ALIAS) is the strongest and most well-rounded clarinetist I have heard to date. Trust me, I was looking for a flaw, some sloppy fingers or a slip of the tongue, but I could not find any. She plays with striking eloquence and not only makes difficult pieces look easy, but also enjoyable. If I were still playing (sadly, it has been almost two years now) this is who I would reach out to for lessons and strive to sound like. - Megan McClary, Marketing Coordinator, Label Relations

Over several seasons of fine ALIAS performances, I have found a thread running through the group that extends beyond the usual checklist of today's chamber ensembles. Exceptional players with pedigreed backgrounds, check. Excellent technique and sensitive musicianship, check. Innovative repertoire selections, check. But it is more than just having a great listening experience-- I always come away from ALIAS concerts with a feeling of deep satisfaction, of being physically taken in by pieces like Kenji Bunch's String Circle. They play with a certain immediacy and directness that leave me feeling like the piece I am hearing is the only piece on the program. - Monica Coombs, Customer Service, Naxos Music Library