

World-Renowned Hermitage Piano Trio Performs Annual Haroldson Masterclass Concert



Liz Torrey January 15, 2018

On Friday, January 13, St. Andrew's enjoyed a visit from the Hermitage Piano Trio. The trio, comprised of world-renowned musicians Misha Keylin (violin), Sergey Antonov (cello), and Ilya Kasantsev (piano), spent the day rehearsing and working with instrumental music students, and performed the School's annual Haroldson Music Concert that evening. For their concert, which you can watch in full [on our Livestream channel](#), the trio performed Shostakovich's *Piano Trio No. 1*, Dvorak's *Piano Trio No. 1*, and for an encore, "April (Snowdrop)" from Tchaikovsky's *The Seasons*

"This was an amazing two days for me and was like a double-shot of espresso for all of the musicians who got to work with the trio, said Director of Instrumental Music Fred Geiersbach. "They had excellent advice for our chamber groups and string section, and I was inspired by their wide-ranging knowledge and curiosity."

"In our masterclass with the Hermitage Trio, I learned a major lesson that can change a mediocre performance into a memorable one," said violinist Noelle Yoo '18. "I realized confidence can impact not only an individual's ability, but also influence the energy of a

whole chamber group. During our masterclass, I started with absolutely no confidence in my performance, which hindered me from engaging with the group because I was too immersed in trying to avoid mistakes. However, with the help from the Hermitage Trio, I was able to release all my stresses and concerns about perfecting the notes and concentrate on the harmony of sounds we were producing in the moment. Once I came to this realization, I noticed that, when the Hermitage Trio performed, all of the members' body language and their sounds made their profound confidence tangible to the audience."

"Being able to work with such accomplished musicians was a very inspirational experience," said cellist Nick Loh '19. "To be honest, I was anxious and nervous about how our chamber group would sound to the trio. Having their cellist, who had studied with one of the greatest cellists in history, watching over me as I played was particularly startling. At one point during our piece, their violinist stopped us and told us to replay the opening of Noelle's part. He emphasized how our body language and the sound our instruments produce directly influence the attitude and playing styles of the other members of the chamber group. I had never realized how much my own musical expression affected the others around me. From their visit, I also learned that I need to be aware of not only the notes and rhythms that I play, but also how these fit within the larger context of what other instruments are playing as well as the piece as a whole. During their concert, I could really sense that each member of the trio knew how to fit their own parts together. They had a clear and mutual understanding of how they approached every piece which they played."

"In their performance, I was struck by the combination of their precision and power," agreed Geiersbach. "Very rarely have I heard a group with such dynamic control, able to suddenly drop from a *fortissimo* to a *piano* so exactly together. They play effusively but with no unnecessary gestures or mannerisms, so you end up focusing on the music and not the personalities. They really enjoyed rehearsing and performing in Engelhard Hall, and I had a great time talking late into the night with them. I hope we can have them back to St. Andrew's again!"

"From my experience with the Hermitage Piano Trio, I gained significant insights with the ways in which professional musicians think and communicate with each other within a chamber music setting, particularly when in the middle of a performance," said saxophonist Alex Qian '19. "After members of the trio offered their tips on how to play more effectively as a group, I was struck by how challenging it was to excel not as individuals, but as a collective group of musicians. At the same time, however, the trio's tips gave us valuable opportunities to reflect on our shortcomings and how we may improve moving forward. Being able to work with the trio in person and experience their concert right here at St. Andrew's was a rare opportunity that I am very grateful for."

The trio's visit to campus was made possible by the endowed Haroldson Music Fund, established in 2012 by Katherine and John Haroldson in honor of their daughters, Sarah '09 and Katherine '12; the fund provides students with an annual masterclass and guest performance by renowned string ensembles, with a goal of enhancing the skill and understanding of our student musicians and to broaden appreciation for music among all students.