

Review: New Century String Quartet

by Joshua Hunt

4 stars

Christel DeHaan Fine Arts Center University of Indianapolis Monday, March 22







Last Monday evening, New Century String Quartet celebrated ten years of friendship. Being a "birthday" party, the night's festive spirit was sustained by the quartet's joy at being together, and shone through in their exuberant music. Composer Chris Rutkowski's "Fireworks" piece from his Nocturnes was an excellent showcase for the dynamic of the group.

The piece started with the haunting chords of a nocturne; then flowed into a sinister movement representing the soaring path of a rocket. After the first initial burst of music, the piece became aleatoric in nature, giving the players free reign to play individually without coordinating with each other. In the end, after the brilliant individual bursts of music, the group returned to cohesion and finished triumphantly.

Keeping with the playful feel of the evening, the quartet premiered Five Whimsies for Non-Grownups by composer Frank Felice. The arrangement centered around five inspirational children's books from Felice's childhood. The five movements were titled with lines such as "I'm in the milk, and the milk's in me!" (from *The Night Kitchen* by Maurice Sendak).

Mischievous in their intense energy, the movements left the listener longing for the days of Seuss' "I do not like them, Sam-I-am." The concert closed with the fiesta spirit of Villa-Lobos String Quartet no. 5. The arrangement circled around popular Spanish children's melodies. Harmonics, interspersed throughout, gave the impression of children whistling, promoting an air of vibrant youth, while the Latin flavor of the arrangement was in perfect keeping with the joy of the evening.

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