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## Debussy Flows in Ripples and Seductive Warbles

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Matthew Dine for The New York Times

The Lyric Chamber Music Society of New York with, from left, Erin Keefe, Gloria Chien and David Shifrin on Wednesday.

Introducing a performance of Debussy's Rhapsody for Clarinet and Piano at the Kosciuszko Foundation on East 65th Street in Manhattan on Wednesday night, the distinguished clarinetist David Shifrin mused to the audience that Debussy probably first heard the piece played in a similarly intimate space. While listening to Mr. Shifrin's seductive warble and the pianist Gloria Chien's elegant ripples and shadings, your eyes might wander across warm, wood-paneled walls bedecked with old oil paintings; an ornately sculptured ceiling; and vintage tapestries hung over the windows.

New Yorkers tend to encounter chamber music more often in concert halls considerably larger than the rooms the music was meant for. One benefit in attending a presentation like this one — by the Lyric Chamber Music Society of New York, which ended its 13th season here — is a sense of proper scale. The room holds around 120 audience members in close quarters, allowing every detail of the music to register without undue exertion.

The concert's title, "Exciting Young Virtuosos: Bringing the Next Generation on Board," referred to Mr. Shifrin's colleagues for the evening: Ms. Chien; Erin Keefe, a violinist; and Andrey Tchekmazov, a cellist. No ingénues, these musicians have already had careers of prominence and distinction, and have important accolades and glowing press citations to show for it.

Still, you sensed that Joan Thomson Kretschmer, the society's founder and artistic director, meant to introduce these players to an inner circle of supporters and enthusiasts. More accurately, the performers were invited to introduce themselves. Apart from Ms. Kretschmer's welcoming comments before each half of the program, the players did the talking, prefacing each piece with personable observations in lieu of printed program notes.

That approach suited the event. You paid closer attention to writhing entanglements and forceful exchanges in a robust account of Kodaly's Duo for Violin and Cello after Ms. Keefe revealed that she and Mr. Tchekmazov were married. You also heard Bartok's lively "Contrasts" in a new light, having learned Mr. Shifrin's droll theory about the real reason Bartok incorporated two differently tuned violins: so that Joseph Szigeti, the violinist of the premiere, wouldn't feel overshadowed by his colleague Benny Goodman's two clarinets.

The program ended with a handsome rendition of Brahms's Clarinet Trio. Here, as before, Mr. Shifrin was first among equals, his luminous playing complemented ideally by Mr. Tchekmazov's hearty tone and Ms. Chien's buoyant touch.