

Distinction abounded in violinist **Kyung-Sun Lee's** masterly account of Vieuxtemps's *Concerto no.5*, performed with the Jupiter Symphony and conductor Jens Nygaard (20 September). Lee's performance of Godard's *Concerto romantique op.35* with the same forces two years ago had been impressive in its technical assurance and stylistic awareness, but in the Vieuxtemps, a concerto that is often performed more dutifully than brilliantly, she gave evidence of significant artistic growth. Beyond superb execution, she conveyed the work's particular Romanticism expertly. Hearing her rendition of the Fifth made me want to hear her play the Fourth.

One week later (28 September) Nygaard's intrepid little orchestra accompanied two more string soloists. Cellist **Chagit Glaser**, whose teachers include Zara Nelsova, Harvey Shapiro and Timothy Eddy, played Bruch's *Kol Nidrei* with attractively warm tone and reserved but affecting expression. Violinist **Alexander Velinzon**, a 1998 Juilliard graduate who studied there with Dorothy DeLay and Masao Kawasaki as well as with Alexander Markov at the Manhattan School, gave a performance of the Paganini *Concerto no.1* that, although somewhat unpolished, was attractively fearless and incisive.

Interesting concerto appearances were, in fact, a highlight of the month. Two performances of the Tchaikovsky *Concerto* one week apart offered youthful soloists with substantially different approaches to that fearsomely challenging work. **Sarah Chang** brought her impressive physical strength and already extensive platform experience to her performance in Avery Fisher Hall with the New York Philharmonic and conductor Kurt Masur (1 October). The former was an asset in the finale; elsewhere she often muscled her way through the score and she was also frequently beset by uncertain intonation. Perversely, in the *Canzonetta* she played too softly, allowing the horn's repeated D to cover her phrases. Chang makes an appealing visual impression on the platform and acknowledges her audience ingratiatingly. However, although she smiles at

her colleagues, she doesn't really seem to be listening to them; moreover, her playing mostly lacks true personal response. That may have accounted in part for the indifferent accompaniment she received.

The previous Friday, at the Manhattan School's Borden Auditorium, **Anne-Estelle Médouze**, who studies there



Joel Krosnick: finally giving Wernick's *Second Cello Concerto* its world premiere

with both Patinka Kopeck and Pinchas Zukerman, played the same work with the Manhattan Symphony and conductor Zdenek Macal. Although she has been before the public since she was eight, Médouze, just two weeks short of her 20th birthday at the time of this performance, still appears rather shy and embarrassed by an audience's acclaim. She needs to hone her tonal concentration so that important notes make their fullest impression, but her playing was far more atmospheric and characterful than Chang's and more exciting too. Médouze's success was abetted by the sensitive leadership of Macal and the superbly attentive student orchestra. Despite the room's wilting heat, the audience, too, quickly sensed the presence of something special.

Nina Kotova, a 26-year-old cellist whose teachers include Rostropovich and Aldo Parisot, has attracted considerable media attention both through the release of her debut CD on Philips and by the fact that she supported her

musical studies for some years by working as a fashion model. She made a strong impression in Tchaikovsky's *Rococo Variations op.33*, which she performed with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra and conductor Constantine Orbelian in Carnegie Hall (9 October). Her tone is more pellucid than warm, her vibrato seems exceptionally varied and expressive and her intonation is admirable. Moreover, she was uncommonly successful in energising each of the variations so that they emerged with more individuality than usual. Her platform demeanour was striking and her bearing, serious and dignified, seemed very much in the Russian tradition. She bears watching.

Richard Wernick's *Cello Concerto no.2*, a 1992 work written for and then spurned by Rostropovich, was finally given its world premiere by **Joel Krosnick** and the Juilliard Orchestra conducted by Robert Mann (Juilliard Theatre, 4 October). Soloist and conductor were longtime colleagues in the Juilliard Quartet, whose espousal of new music is an essential constituent of its history. However, Krosnick's sound seemed closed on top and his efficient rather than eloquent performance style militated against the emergence of much expressive content in Wernick's 18-minute, one-movement work. Its delineated sections – from gruff opening to busy finale – passed without much incident. Dry stuff – no wonder Rostropovich avoided it.

On 22 September violinists **Leila Josefowicz** and **Jaime Laredo** played Moszkowski's *Suite in G minor op.71* with superbly well-matched tone and a winning manner. It was the highlight of the opening programme of the 25th anniversary season of chamber music at the 92nd Street Y.

A mixed programme presented at Merkin Hall (28 September) by the Prometheus Chamber Players included an exceptionally compelling account of Kodály's *Duo for Violin and Cello op.7* played by **Adele Anthony** and **Brent Samuel**, and a suave yet incisive reading of Tchaikovsky's *Souvenir de Florence op.70* by violinists **David Chan** and **Patricia Sunwoo**, violists **Nicholas Cords** and **Vivek Kamath**, and cellist **Edward Arron** joined by Samuel. □