**Peninsula Reviews**

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**Miró Quartet – Ensemble playing at its best**



By [Lyn Bronson](http://www.peninsulareviews.com/author/peninadmin/)

Last night at Sunset Center in Carmel, Chamber Music Monterey Bay initiated its 2017-2018 season with a return engagement by the Miró Quartet (this concert represented its fifth appearance for CMMB). The Miró Quartet consists of Daniel Ching, violin, William Fedkenheuer, violin, John Largess, viola, and Joshua Gindele, cello. Based in Austin, TX, the Miró Quartet takes its name from the Spanish artist, Joan Miró, whose surrealist works — with subject matter drawn from the realm of memory and imaginative fantasy — are some of the most original of the 20th century.

Right from the opening notes of five Selections from Cypresses by Antonín Dvořák, we knew we were about to hear a remarkable performance. What was immediately apparent was a blending of rich, mellow sounds in perfect synchronization — effortless playing that captured Dvořák’s youthful spirit, but also revealed that even at an early age he was already an accomplished master of his craft. There was much beauty and charm in this moving performance.

The centerpiece of the program was a 10th anniversary performance of Credo, a work by Kevin Puts (rhymes with “flutes”) commissioned by CMMB in 2007. Puts had been asked in the original commission to incorporate in this work aspects of American life, both negative and positive. Speaking on stage in 2007 at the premiere performance, Puts said that although he recognized that our society has serious problems both internally and externally, he could still say that he was proud to be an American. Now, ten years later, the problems in American society that disturbed Puts in 2007 are worse than ever — our involvement in foreign wars, drug addiction and a gun culture that continues to facilitate horrifying mass shootings. Mr. Puts was not on stage for this performance to reveal his current thoughts, but if he had been, I believe he would have added to his concerns about America’s future the ever increasing threat from climate change — warming oceans, massive dangerous storms, flooding and rising ocean levels.

Since Mr. Puts wasn’t able to be with us last night, the performance of his masterpiece, Credo, had to speak for itself. The brilliant and expressive playing by the members of the Miró Quartet fascinates us as much ten years later as it did in its original premiere performance. However, in the ensuing ten years the performers have added increased intensity and new levels of expressivity. By any standard it was thoroughly satisfying and masterful performance we heard last night.

The concert ended with a performance of Beethoven’s String Quartet No. 13 in B-flat Major, Op. 130. What can we say about this epic work that hasn’t already been said? Well, we can say that in the hands of the members of the Miró Quartet, we heard new subtleties and new intensities in this bold and dramatic performance. At forty-seven minutes duration, it demands a lot from audiences, but it was a journey well worth taking.

The audience apparently agreed, for there was a prolonged standing ovation.