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Summer chamber music returns to art museum

By Leslie Kandell

Special to the Eagle

Insofar as chamber music concerts roar, the Clark Art Institute's series roared back into gear Tuesday.

The auditorium was full for the Amelia Piano Trio, whose warm-blooded performance of a well-conceived program was preceded by dinner—an optional party of a new trifecta of art, food, and music.

The series known as the Williamstown Chamber Concerts had been run for 19 years by Stephen and Marlene Walt. After a summer in transition, the Clark is now sponsoring a new series, using the four-concert four-Tuesday template.

The Amelia began its concert with a single Grieg movement, following it with Beethoven's early Op. 1 No. 2 and Dvorak's masterful Op. 90, the *Dumky*.

The progression suggested that one composer couldn't see clearly what he was doing and abandoned his project, while another was figuring out what he was doing, and a third knew exactly what he was doing and designed his own form,

flipping the bird to established rules.

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Grieg's *andante con moto in c minor*, obviously intended as a slow movement for something—he never gave it an opus number—begins with a sad unmemorable melody. Expansive and flowing, it is too big for a slow movement and ends quietly, as slow movements usually do. More than the other pieces, this movement evoked the Clark's current exhibition of Whistler and Inness, contemporaries of Grieg and Dvorak, called "Like Breath on Glass."

Either these pieces were good choices or the playing brought out the fog of the Grieg, the sly smile of Beethoven, the mercurial Dvorak. Cellist Jason Duckles had a gentle way of noticing when it was the violin's turn and Anthea Kreston ripped right in, especially in the Dvorak.

Beethoven's trio showed the young (not yet deaf) composer busy hewing to tradition, whose practices he was beginning to respectfully reshape with little harmonic and rhythmic surprises that the ensemble sensitively picked up. After the long slow second

movement, the scherzo ran off gaily, and pianist Rieko Aizawa led the grabbed phrase endings.

The piano trios of Grieg—none actually, except for the movement—would fit on a 45 rpm record. Beethoven's piano trios make an evening but Dvorak's? A single one of his five takes up half a concert and the *Dumky* (plural of *Dumka*, a fleeting thought) is the last of them.

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Dvorak cast his work in six movements with 12 tempo markings, like fleeting thoughts. The basic changes are between meditative—with plaintive melodies—and irrepressible, with Klezmer flavor connecting Dvorak's Bohemia with East Europe. The cello cadenza is a reminder that this man was about to compose the one and only Dvorak cello concerto.