

SAN FRANCISCO CLASSICAL VOICE

Kids Around the Bay

by Lisa Petrie



Young Artists Shining at Menlo

There aren't too many moments to relax in such an intense program as the Chamber Music Institute's Young Performers at Music@Menlo, but after a successful concert, such as the one on July 30, there is certainly time to congratulate friends and enjoy the sunshine. Free Koret Concerts on Saturdays are reserved especially for these young artists, ages 8-18, to show what they've learned at this prestigious festival. Cellist Johannes Gray (pictured, center) has something to smile about: He has just performed an almost flawless rendition of Haydn's flashy Passacaglia for Violin and Cello, with his equally virtuosic partner, local violinist Christy Chen — by memory, that is. Gray is returning to the institute for a second summer. Based outside of Chicago, he will perform a solo with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra this season.

Brothers Nicholas and Jonathan Swensen are in Palo Alto from Denmark. Cellist Jonathan (right) and his trio gave the audience a serious interpretation of the Shostokovich Piano Trio 2 in E Minor, Op. 67. His younger brother and mother (part of a requirement at Menlo that adults accompany the young artists) are along for the ride.

It's somewhat eerie, the mature sounds that emanate from these prodigies. Clearly they are operating in an adult arena, projecting a musical depth and understanding that seems far beyond their years. Reserve your free ticket to hear them play gems of the chamber music repertoire, Aug. 6 and 13, 1 p.m. at the Menlo School in Palo Alto.