

Awesome show by Fehr

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Special to Okanagan Newspapers

Sometimes it's easy to overlook the talented musicians who call this region home.

Ironically, it has taken COVID travel restrictions, combined with a slight easing of attendance constraints, to remind local audiences we have exceptional musicians right on our doorstep.

Case and point?

The wonderfully varied presentation of "A Classic Christmas" offered by Penticton's lyric coloratura soprano Tracy Fehr and her three musical friends at the Venables Theatre in Oliver: pianist and composer Wynn Nordlund, cellist and alto Olivia Walsh, and soprano Heather Allen

From the moment the quartet stepped onto the stage, the audience was in wonderful musical hands, all under the direction of the very accomplished Tracy Fehr.

The credentials for each one of these musicians are both impressive and extensive and, in the case of Fehr and Nordland, international in scope. They all deserve their fine reputations as was confirmed throughout the evening.

Their seasonally-focussed repertoire that evening travelled easily through the centuries moving from medieval and renaissance offerings to more contemporary and familiar

Christmas-time pieces, all showcasing first-rate talents either singly, in a duet, a trio or as a group. Their relaxed manner and

medieval costumes presented a delightful visual setting for both the music and the stories about the music they shared.

The highlights of the evening were many but for this reviewer several stand out: the light and sensitive touch of piano accompanist Norlund, the rich underscoring of Walsh's cello in de la Monnoye's "Pat-a-pan" and, most impressively, Fehr's voice which is so pure and clear, especially in her upper register.

One couldn't help but ask for more as the last notes of "O, Holy Night" filled the theatre.

This veritable feast of Christmas music was offered thanks to the efforts the South Okanagan Concert Society and their many, faithful sponsors, all of whom ensure programmes featuring high calibre artists like Tracy Fehr and Friends are both available and affordable.

The Society's 2021-22 series began in November with Penticton's highly-regarded Offramp Jazz Sextet followed by Fehr's Christmas classics. On Jan. 28, the Society hosts the highly-acclaimed, well-travelled Montreal Guitar Trio and then back for a return visit to Oliver on March 18 will be siblings Bryan and Silvie Cheng of the Cheng2Duo on piano and cello. These are concerts not to be missed.

Tickets are available either at the Venables box office Tuesday through Thursday, by phone at 250-498-1626 or on line at [ww.venablestheatre.ca](http://www.venablestheatre.ca).