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TOLEDO, OHIO MONDAY, JANUARY 7, 2008

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## REVIEW

# Creative verse melds with Mozart

By **SALLY VALLONGO**

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An original program of music and verse about two brilliant, talented men — Albert Einstein and Wolfgang Mozart — performed yesterday by New York poet Kate Light and Toledo's Zin String Quartet had its own touch of brilliance.

This second program in Chamber Music Toledo's inaugural season tempered winter drizzle outside with glowing creativity and sparkling performance inside the Maumee Indoor Theater. (All that and popcorn, too, if you wished.)

"Einstein's Mozart: Two Geniuses," with text by Light and music by Mozart, was as much about innovation and invention as the two men it celebrated.

Who'd have thought deconstructing songs could be so stimulating?

Instead of poetry set to music, it was poetry juxtaposed with movements of Mozart's 1783 d minor quartet K. 421, and, after intermission, the 1790 opus in F Major, K. 590.

Both pieces were performed with charm, wit, and great en-

semble sensitivity by violinists Merwin Siu and David Dyer, violist Cheryl Trace, and cellist Renee Goubeaux.

Especially in the second half, after the audience was asked to hold all applause, the flow between words and music emerged in all its imaginativeness. While Light's text was not written with a particular Mozart quartet in mind, the two seemed a particularly felicitous match. Both works reminded of how deceptively simple the composer's music can seem, until one is drawn into its internal workings.

Much the same could be said of Light's poetry and her performance. A polished and convincing reading emphasized the complex internal and external rhyme schemes and her fluid rhythms.

So musical was Light's delivery that it almost belied the depth of her subject matter.

After all, how many poets, today or ever, choose to write about the complex particle theory of light or something as mind-bending as relativity?

In a time when self-absorption

is the norm for versifiers at all levels, Light's willingness — no, her bravery — in wrestling complex scientific ideas into elegant couplets, and then infusing gentle humor into the topic stands as a landmark of artistic synthesis.

The Maumee theater stage, set as a live hall, offered a pleasant backdrop for the performance. Its excellent acoustics enhanced the Zin Quartet's playing, making the most of subtle dynamic changes and delicate articulation in each movement.

An audience of about 75 gave the performers a standing ovation. Seen among the crowd were several local poets.

How wonderful it would be to have a recording of this work — something Light said hasn't happened since she created it in 2006 on commission by the Colorado Chamber Players. Creating such a work, perhaps with an appropriate graphic component, would seem like a marvelous grant project.

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