



The Musical Gourmet

Stuart Canin: Sometimes time stands still

By Joseph Gold

Stuart Canin's violin concert on Sunday at Piedmont Center for the Arts brought back beautiful memories. You could almost see the hands of the clock flying backwards. Or maybe time just stood still. I was transported back to the memorable days of my youth, a time when musical artists were complete personalities.

That's what we experienced on Sunday afternoon, November 21. But the listeners needed to be open to that concept – personality not perfection, insight not

pro forma posturing. Some old names made the scene... Jack Benny, Harry Truman, Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin. Paganini even made a shadow appearance.

An entire book could be written about the accomplishments of violinist Stuart Canin, now 95 and performing like a young man. He is credited with being involved with the best-publicized feud in the history of radio, a so-called feud between immortal radio comedians Jack Benny and Fred Allen.

Then, not much later he played



Photos by Dave Weiland

Violinist Stuart Canin (left) was joined by pianist Helene Wickett and violinist Rene' Mandel in a memorable concert November 21, 2021 at the Piedmont Center for the Arts.

the violin for the Big Three world leaders at the Potsdam Conference in bombed out Germany at the end of World War II. And who attended this command performance? None other than President Truman, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin. Such was his early fame. Canin then won the Paganini competition in Genoa, Italy in 1959.

Sunday's concert in Piedmont was a lesson for music lovers. Canin was joined on stage by violinist Rene Mandel and pianist Helene Wickett. The opening piece from Shostakovich's *Five Pieces* brought a tear to this critic's eyes. From then on, the concert developed in magnitude.

Many concert musicians are content to play the same repertoire season after season. Not Canin. He learned the immensely difficult *Divertimento for Violin and Piano* by Stravinsky just for the occasion. It was played with such virtuoso Insouciance that it looked easy. Did I see Canin with a wry smile on his face?

The concert concluded with a dramatic performance of Beethoven's *Sonata No. 7*. Throughout the concert, the ensemble was impressive, with Wickett on piano and Mandel joining Canin for the Shostakovich.

Some miracles are biblical. Sunday's was musical. The mir-

acle was not so much that Stuart Canin is 95. That might be sufficient for mortals. The miracle is that at 95 he is still masterful and at the top of his game! All the others are gone. Stuart Canin remains – master of all he surveys. That's the stuff dreams are made of.



Stuart Canin basks in the adulation of the audience at a concert on Sunday, November 21.



At the tender age of 95, Stuart Canin was in full command of his instrument.