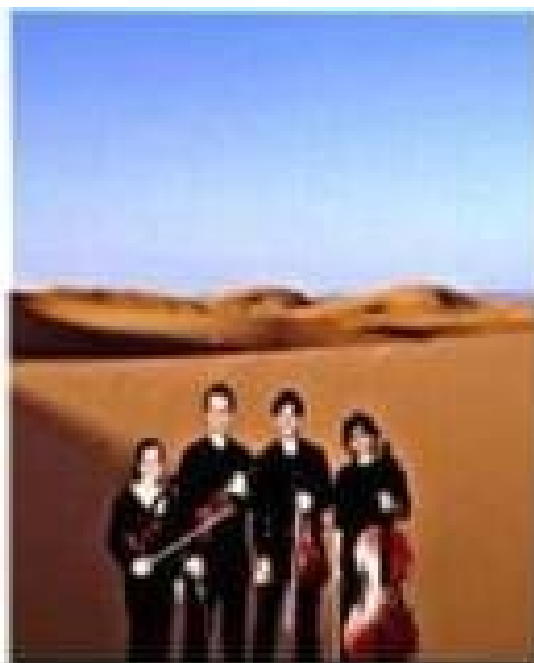


Mirage Kwartet reaches 5000 visits in first month on YouTube

JILL ARCARO GORDON

As one of Internet's top 50 websites YouTube has proven a fantastic means to promote groups like the Mirage Kwartet (Jakub Miller y Anileys Bermúdez, violins, Luis Diez Arcaro, viola, and Sinan Ercan, cello). For those of you unfamiliar with the site, YouTube is a free video sharing web site which lets users upload and view video clips. With around 40 million visits a month classical groups like Mirage Kwartet can reach 5000 visits, which on a normal blog can take up to 14 months. The Mirage, formed by four young musicians living and studying in the city of Groningen in North-East Holland, has demonstrated some savvy music marketing ideas combined with a simple but coherent website. In spite of its html simplicity, their [website](#) demonstrates a knack for self-promotion and online branding. With the objective of scratching a little under the surface I spoke with them in Holland for their testimony and to ask what other plans they have for squeezing the potential out of the Internet.



Mirage Kwartet

Question: How did four musicians with such diverse backgrounds meet?

Answer: We were students at the Prins Claus Conservatorium in Groningen (North-East Holland). It was basically “love at first”, we got together by chance to play at a concert and immediately hit it off. I think that that is one of the characteristics of the group, we have a great time together, and we hope it shows!

On the other hand, we had been wanting to have a stable string quartet for some time in order to be able to work in more depth on the music. This also permitted us to do things we had been dreaming with for some time...

Q.: Does Mirage Kwartet have any special line it is trying to follow (repertoire,

promotion)?

A.: Maybe not a “special line” but certainly a different way of doing things. There are already too many groups that play the same things and present themselves in a similar way -beware that this is not just criticising how well anybody plays- it is more about the general approach to music.

So there is certainly the innovation factor, although it is our own type of innovation. Because there is so much diversity within the group, the cultural and sociological influences are really varied. We love novelty although at the same time we consider we are quite down-to-earth in our tastes. All in all, we think it is an exciting time to be a player now-a-days, with much great music being written in all types of styles.

Also, because there are two Spanish members in the group, there is a certain influence of music like Piazzolla or other Latin-American composers. We certainly look forward to exploring all these possibilities.

Then there is of course the entire business aspect of having an ensemble. Because we started so small and, basically, doing it all ourselves, we have been able to “inspire” all our decisions (the website, the way we promote Mirage Kwartet) in our personal experience and the way we like to do things, which means we try to be original while striving for the maximum quality within our means!

□

Q.: What do you think of the new crossover groups in classical music like Red Priest, Montana Skies, or NeoCamerata?

A.: For us, the groups you mention are a clear depiction of two phenomena that are taking place right now.

Firstly, that the public is hungry for something that is new, that is approachable and at the same time has the stamp of never-endingly aiming for quality. For a long time, at least while we were being educated, “new” music was: boring, moralising (if you didn't like it, it was your fault, your ears just weren't good enough), state-funded. Now we find groups that are exciting, just-plain-likeable and have success with the audiences. This must mean that something really good is happening to classical music, even if it is not so “classical” any more!

Secondly, the success of these musicians also shows how it is possible to be at least moderately successful without necessarily signing a record contract with one of the big companies.

Q.: Do you see eye to eye on things?

A.: What???

Q.: How do you resolve conflict?

A.: We don't, we believe in letting it all well up inside. (Smiles) Every month we go to a Finnish sauna where we stage a medieval nude mud fight. That takes care of most all tension.

Q.: How do you think YouTube compares with MySpace?

A.: Ummm, you can post videos on YouTube?

Q.: Are these resources just as useful for classical musicians as they are for rock and pop?

A.: Well, at first you might think not, since the let us say typical audience on YouTube or MySpace is not the people you would imagine going to classical music concerts (you know, with grey hair and monocles), but then...

There are millions of people that like to listen to music that is good, emotional and shows real love for detail and high quality; and that is precisely the type of music we love to do.

© 2007 Jill Arcaro Gordon / Mundoclasico.com. Todos los derechos reservados