

# theStrad

ESSENTIAL READING FOR THE STRING MUSIC WORLD SINCE 1890

April 2014

## NEW YORK CONCERTS

Lysander Trio

Merkin Concert Hall, 14 January 2014

By Leah Swann Hollingsworth

A 2012 Concert Artists Guild winner, **the Lysander Trio plays with passion, authenticity and excellent ensemble.** Turino's *Circulo* immediately showcased these talents, and Mozart's C major Piano Trio K548 followed suit. Although some of the phrasing was overly complicated, this only highlighted the players' purpose and thoughtfulness – nothing by rote. **The trio shone in Ben-Haim's *Variations on a Hebrew Melody*, and the muted string unison played senza vibrato before the variations began was effective and compelling. Each variation was imbued with distinctive character and cellist Michael Katz's bold, rich sound especially captivated the ear.**

The most interesting work programmed was commissioned by the ensemble from four teenage students (music-theory pupils of the group's pianist Liza Stepanova), who were asked to collaborate on a piece based on Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a character from which the Lysander Trio draws its name. Its performance was quite delightful – the players clearly enjoyed the work and brought out its charm, wit and beauty in a particularly personal way.

**Ravel's Piano Trio fulfilled the promise of the previous works, highlighting the group's incredible ensemble, passionate playing, articulate and imaginative ideas, and wide palette of colours. Performed with sensitivity, panache and emotional depth, it perfectly displayed the Lysander Trio's enormous potential.**