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Classical Music Review Da Capo Chamber Players

**Works of Crumb and Tower, With Stylized Mime, as Well**

By ALLAN KOZINN

New-music groups periodically undertake theatrical collaborations, both as a way of reaching new listeners and to shake things up for the listeners they have. The Da Capo Chamber Players joined forces with the Yass Hakoshima Movement Theater - which is to say with Mr. Hakoshima, a choreographer, dancer and mime - on Tuesday evening for a program of George Crumb and Joan Tower works at Symphony Space.

It was an arrangement that, visually at least, took the Da Capo musicians out of the spotlight: they deployed at a corner of the stage, leaving the rest to Mr. Hakoshima. That isn't to say the group disappeared, or that it didn't offer theatrical touches of its own, including sparkly jackets in the second half of the program, and the almost choreographic movement written into Mr. Crumb's "Eleven Echoes of Autumn" (1966), "Black Angels" (1970) and "Vox Balaenae" (1971). In a way, two shows played simultaneously: the musical performance made one set of points, either abstract or programmatic; Mr. Hakoshima's elegant, stylized mime occasionally illuminated the music, but more typically offered an alternative narrative. In "Black Angels," for amplified string quartet, Mr. Crumb had a vast agenda that included exploring the extremes to which string timbres can be taken, juxtaposing the antique (by way of distorted quotations from older works) and the avant-garde, and protesting the Vietnam War. Mr. Hakoshima, though, built his dance around the duality of good and evil, God and the Devil, a notion Mr. Crumb touched on in a program note.

He took other interesting paths as well. His "Autumn Fields," set to Mr. Crumb's "Eleven Echoes of Autumn," had the feeling of a harvest ritual, and "Marionette," his setting of Ms. Tower's lively "Petroushskates" (1980), built on the idea of Petroushka trying to break free of the puppeteer's strings.

The Da Capo players were in fine shape. Their reading of "Black Angels," one of Mr. Crumb's most powerful, haunting works, drew on both the violence and the mystery in the score. The group did full justice to the extended timbres in "Vox Balaenae," and to the more conventional shimmer of "Petroushskates." Meighan Stoops, the ensemble's clarinetist, had a star turn in Ms. Tower's "Wings" (1981) and André Emelianoff, the cellist, and David Bowlin, the violinist, played unaccompanied interludes between some of the pieces.