

ARTITUDE: Peliska brothers play alone together

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Finding works for their instruments together is difficult, although they'd welcome the challenge.



(Photo: Submitted photo)

Two Naples alumni, brothers Samuel and Joseph Peliska, are the opening guest artists for the Classic Chamber Concert season. But not at same time.

Samuel, 28, plays clarinet; Joseph, 21, plays guitar.

"There are no works really written for clarinet and guitar," the elder Peliska said. "But just the idea has got us inspired to look for things."

So the day could come when the two brothers will appear as guest artists on the same work. It just won't be Monday evening; attendees will hear Joseph featured on the Vivaldi Concerto in D major for Guitar (transcribed from the lute concerto of that name) and Samuel on the Mozart Clarinet Concerto in A major.

Still, this concert is a first for the brothers: "We've never played on the same concert," Samuel said.

For him it's also a rare chance to be the soloist. Samuel, who holds a doctorate in music from Florida State University, doesn't lack for work, but it's generally as part of a full orchestra. The Florida State doctoral graduate in music is principal clarinetist for the Symphonia Gulf Coast in Destin; he plays second clarinet in the Tallahassee and Ocala symphonies; and was just named principal clarinet for the Meridian (Mississippi) Symphony Orchestra.

"It's a six-hour drive. It's pretty far from Tallahassee, where I live, but so is Naples," said Samuel, a one-time member of its Youth Philharmonic who has even worked for the Naples Philharmonic, replacing a clarinetist on maternity leave. He's also played in the Opera Naples and Gulfshore Opera orchestras. Scheduling is an exercise in advanced logistics, he affirms: "I get around all over the state.

"It almost comes down to chance in the end, how many concerts you can play with each one a season, because sometimes they overlap and you have to choose which one you want to do," he said. It helps when both he and his wife, violinist Natasha Marsalli, also a former Neapolitan, are working on the same concert and can drive together.

None of that is an option for his brother, whose instrument isn't in the established inventory of a modern orchestra. He is either the featured artist or solo performer, as he will be the Naples Botanical Garden's Night Lights in the Garden.

Joseph feels he's in the right place as a student at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California: "I'm performing extensively every week in context of chamber setting or solo, and then there's often opportunity for gigs around Malibu or Los Angeles" — all of them in the classical genre, he explained.

He's also studying with one of the most famous classical guitarists in the U.S., Christopher Parkening: "The Vivaldi Concerto (on the concert program) is a piece I've been working on for a long time with Christopher Parkening, and I've wanted to perform it, so they've given me that chance here."

Joseph wants to stay with classical guitar, but he is studying a companion skill.

"I've been getting a lot into music production and engineering for the last few years so I have different opportunities to record or write music. In Los Angeles, it's pretty accessible and broad. I'm also very interested in video and audio production, and it's a great place to be for that."

But they both are happy to be coming back to Naples.

"The first job I was ever paid for was with William Noll (artistic director of Classic Chamber Concerts) in the Opera Naples orchestra," Samuel recalled.

His brother even worked for Noll for a season.

"He's helped me a lot in the last couple years. He's a fantastic musician, conductor and orchestral director," Joseph said. "He always has great insights into the pieces we play."

Classic Chamber Concerts

Where: Sugden Community Theatre, 701 Fifth Ave, S., Naples

Who: Guest artists Samuel and Joseph Peliska performing Vivaldi and Mozart; also on the program, Handel's Overture to "Giove in Argo"

When: 8 p.m. Monday, Dec. 19

Admission: \$60; student rush tickets \$25

To buy: 239-263-7990 or at the box office



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Joseph Peliska, seated, and Samuel Peliska open the Classic Chamber Concert Series. (Photo: Submitted photo)