

Duo airs new music from the soulful to the abstract

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Who performed: Duo46, made up of violinist Beth Ilana Schneider and guitarist Matt Gould, played music from the avant garde to more conventional sounds at Birmingham-Southern College. Cellist Craig Hultgren assisted in the Birmingham Art Music Alliance event.

The composers: The Argentinian Jorge Liderman drew inspiration from Sephardic Jewish music, Paul Richards and BSC composers Dorothy Hindman and Charles Norman Mason toyed with original acoustic and electronic effects. Joel Scott Davis' honest beauty played out nostalgically and longtime University of Texas composer Karl Korte was on hand to hear two premieres.

Best of the music: Mason is still pumping out mini-masterpieces on the heels of his Rome Prize year. For "Scrapings," he placed speakers in the lobby, restrooms, even outside the building, to play what he calls "music for architectural spaces." The synthesized and recorded sounds turned up on stage in a spacious, absorbing and uplifting dialogue with Duo46. Korte's spicy and tart "Two Makams" transported listeners to the desert heat, drawing from the irregular pulses and passionate melodies of Arabic music. Davis, a Samford grad and UAB instructor, skillfully weaved the two instruments into a grounded, melodious whole, reminiscent of Mark O'Connor.

Also memorable: Dorothy Hindman approached the edge of possibilities for these two instruments with bleeps, spurts and slides in "three small gestures." Gould played solo in Paul Richards' gentle giant, "The Great Octopus," but was helped out by taped electronic sounds. It told the tale of an eight-handed guitarist under the sea.

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