

*Monday, 22 August 2005*



I met him the young Israeli cellist Gavriel Lipkind backstage at the Concertgebouw. He was still perspiring from the recital and my hands were black from drawing. I showed him the sketches I had just made, inspired by his passionate music. He was excited about them and said 'Let's keep in touch'. Years later a drawing of mine was on the cover of his CD *Cello Miniatures and Folklores*. Now he was playing at a classical music festival and invited me to come to the rehearsals.

There I was introduced to the German *Meritis Ensemble* (Meritis was Schubert's nickname), in Holland to attend master classes. They came from Mannheim, which happens to be my birthplace, so we had something in common. These young talented musicians were making a web site to promote their ensemble. I was asked me to make some drawings for the site. I was not sure I could meet their high expectations after Gabi's recommendation. In a small stuffy room, I attended their rehearsals of Bartok's Third String Quartet. We were all working hard, struggling with our respective occupations. The music was not easy to play (or listen to) and it was hard to capture a whole quartet on paper. Four is not a good number, a trio would be better for the composition. The problem with rehearsals is that musicians tend to stop from time to time to discuss the music, which takes me out of my trance. Fortunately they did a long concert that evening with music by Mozart and Dvorak and I made some inspired sketches. At the end of the evening we left as friends. I almost felt I had played with them as the fifth member of the ensemble.



The next evening Gabi gave a concert at a church with an ensemble from Jerusalem. The event was sponsored by a bank. The first four rows of seats were reserved. VIPS often feel too important to show up, but they all came. The atmosphere was highbrow and elitist. John Lennon would say they could rattle their jewels instead of applaud. At first I felt embarrassed about my dirty hands and art supplies in the company of all these millionaires. But they were warm and hospitable. I found a strategic spot for myself on a church bench at the side of the stage in between two elderly ladies. One of them dusted off some of my eraser crumbs from her dress. After the concert I ran away, not because I did not enjoy it but because I was afraid to miss the last bus.