

## **BGSU Quartet plays to appreciative audience**

By Earl Lehman

It was a beautiful way to spend a rainy, windy and gloomy Sunday afternoon by attending The First United Methodist Church's Concert Series.

The Bowling Green State University String Quartet composed of Paul Makara, first violin; Vasile Beluska, second violin; Pamela Ryan, viola; and Alan Smith, cello, assisted by Frances Burnett, piano, were guest artists.

The quartet played with precise articulation and the beautiful nuances and superb technique were truly professional. Ms Burnett also displayed excellent musicianship and it was a pleasure to have such fine music for our enjoyment.

A small but very appreciative audience responded enthusiastically and the comments following the concert were very positive. The intimate church setting and the fine acoustics in the church were ideal for chamber music of this kind.

Haydn's Quartet in F Major Opus 77, No. 2, was the last of his many quartets and showed many characteristics of Schubert and the Romantic Period.

The opening movement was joyful and was played with excitement and confidence. There were excellent dynamic contrasts and the precision and sensitivity of the quartet for musical nuances was outstanding.

The third movement with its Schubert-like melodies and rich harmonies was beautiful. The final movement ended with vigorous full sounding chords bringing the number to an exciting close.

Hugo Wolf, well-known for his fine songs, composed the next number entitled Italian Serenade.

The thick texture, intense emotional feeling and chromaticism gave the composition a feeling of crowded ideas and uncertainties.

There were some tuneful and delicate melodies and extreme high ranges for the instruments. The unity and respect of the players for each other was evident as they passed the themes from one to the other.

Ms. Burnett joined the quartet after the intermission to play Robert Schuman's Piano Quintet in E Flat Major Opus 44.

This is the first significant work for piano and strings and is still one of the best and most popular. The opening statement was bold and energetic and there were marked contrasts between sections.

At times the piano was overshadowed by the quartet and many of the beautiful lyric passages were covered. Ms. Burnett showed excellent technique and was very capable of handling the full scale passages.

The clarity with which she played the fast arpeggios and interval skips in the Scherzo was remarkable. This quintet is a very challenging number but the players were able to master and perform it with artistic interpretation and musicianship.

It was a fine and inspirational afternoon for music lovers and Bluffton is fortunate to have such excellent opportunities to hear good music.