

## Siegel explores 2 worlds of music — delightfully

BY WARREN GERDS  
PRESS-GAZETTE

Musical explorer Corky Siegel brought his two groups to the Weidner Center on Friday for an entertaining one-two punch in front of a crowd of 1,000.

The first half closed with a standing ovation. It was that kind of a rare show.

That half featured Chamber Blues, a formidable outfit that's playfully serious — or seriously playful — as it delves Siegel's singular blending of two styles.

Everything seemed to have wit about it. The music doesn't make fun of classical/chamber music, it has fun with it.

Here's some of his droll humor: Corky Siegel's Chamber Blues was "thrilled and honored to be opening for The Siegel-Schwall Band tonight," Siegel said. "I've been following Siegel-Schwall for most of my career. It's been a

major influence."

Chamber Blues — a string quartet, plus a percussionist, plus Siegel — opened with a series from Siegel's *Opus* collection. String quartet music toys with the classics, weaving in percussive sounds and romps on piano and harmonica, with rhythmic words tossed in along the way. It's infectious, bright, amiable stuff.

The core of Guillaume Combet and Rebecca McFaul, violins; Richard Halajian, viola; and Jill Kaeding, cello, totally embraces the specialized breed of music. Nothing seems forced. Sounds move fluidly and easily.

Siegel-Schwall had the stage for the second half. Again Siegel joshed. Alone at the microphone, he introduced the quartet, then ran around behind the curtains to enter the stage as the fourth player.

This set was "natural" blues, with no synthesizing of styles.

### Concert review

**Corky Siegel's Chamber  
Blues and The Siegel-Schwall  
Band**  
★★★★

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★★★★ Excellent; ★★★ Good;  
★★ Fair; ★ Poor

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When Blues Hall of Fame drummer Sam Lay put down a beat and sang *I Correct It All*, it was slow, mournful, real blues.

When Jim Schwall sang *I Think It Was the Wine* — including this episode, "I thought I met an angel last night, but this morning I woke up with a clown" — it was comical blues.

When Rollo Radford put his bass to *Hush, Hush*, it was blues with a rhythm kick.

And Siegel was Siegel — digging into the piano, blowing smoothly on the harmonica and singing. He's a special musician.