



## **Symphony's holiday program sets seasonal vibe**

**By Keith Powers / Contributing writer**

Posted Dec 2, 2017 at 7:11 PM

Updated Dec 2, 2017 at 7:11 PM

Halloween is way too early. Even Thanksgiving. But the first weekend in December seems just about the right time to get in the holiday spirit.

The Cape Symphony Orchestra thinks so, performing half a dozen “Holiday on the Cape” programs this weekend at the Barnstable Performing Arts Center.

Saturday afternoon's concert may not have had the most complicated or sophisticated music the CSO will ever play, but maestro Jung-Ho Pak and the orchestra made sure to spread plenty of musical cheer. The stage was set with wreaths, trees and lights, the orchestra decked out festively in white (men) and black (women). It was easy to feel the seasonal vibe.

In some ways, building a successful holiday program may be more difficult than programming a subscription concert. During the regular season, finding a nice overture, a starry soloist for a concerto, and then wrapping up with an engaging symphony is a sure ticket to success.

At the holidays, it ain't so easy. But Pak certainly knows how to find musical success, and, as he put it, he has “little taste for boredom.” Building this program around his terrific orchestra, along with three singers with Cape Cod ties, and inviting Scrooge, schoolkids and the Chatham Chorus along, too, Pak found a way to include the favorites and mix in lots of surprises as well.

Transplanted Cape Codder Monica Rizzio made “Let It Snow” sound a little forced, but “Santa Will Find You” organically explored her native Texas roots, sounding sweet and homey. Martha's Vineyard native Siren Mayhew showed a truly warm contralto with “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas,” and was joined by the children from Eddy Elementary for an rousing reading of John Lennon's “Happy Xmas” (“and so this is Christmas”).

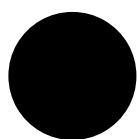
Hyannis' own Kate McGarry joined her husband, stylish guitarist Keith Ganz, for Joni Mitchell's noir holiday folk tune, “River” (“it's coming on Christmas”), a nice antidote to the nonstop cheer. A “Jingle Bells meet John Philip Sousa” arrangement — the pairing actually worked — closed out the

opening half of the program.

Scrooge visited after intermission, in his completely repentant state. Actor Neil McGarry grabbed the audience's attention and didn't let go, with an enthusiastic monologue from Dickens' famous Christmas tale. This nonmusical bit might have been the highlight of the show.

The three soloists all returned to harmonize together, and with the Chatham Chorale. A nice instrumental excerpt, featuring the orchestra's string principals, of Corelli's "Christmas Concerto" let concertmaster Jae Cosmos Lee show his leadership skills.

"A Celtic Nativity," "I Saw Three Ships" and "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" all got full-throated, harmonized renditions. Of the soloists, Mayhew was the greater of equals, with a stirring, vibrato-laden belt-out of "O Holy Night" ringing through the auditorium.



### **SIGN UP FOR DAILY E-MAIL**

Wake up to the day's top news, delivered to your inbox

---

## **Symphony's holiday program sets seasonal vibe**

**By Keith Powers / Contributing writer**

Posted Dec 2, 2017 at 7:11 PM

Updated Dec 2, 2017 at 7:11 PM

Halloween is way too early. Even Thanksgiving. But the first weekend in December seems just about the right time to get in the holiday spirit.

The Cape Symphony Orchestra thinks so, performing half a dozen "Holiday on the Cape" programs this weekend at the Barnstable Performing Arts Center.

Saturday afternoon's concert may not have had the most complicated or sophisticated music the CSO will ever play, but maestro Jung-Ho Pak and the orchestra made sure to spread plenty of musical cheer. The stage was set with wreaths, trees and lights, the orchestra decked out festively in white (men) and black (women). It was easy to feel the seasonal vibe.

In some ways, building a successful holiday program may be more difficult than programming a subscription concert. During the regular season, finding a nice overture, a starry soloist for a concerto, and then wrapping up with an engaging symphony is a sure ticket to success.

At the holidays, it ain't so easy. But Pak certainly knows how to find musical success, and, as he put it, he has "little taste for boredom." Building this program around his terrific orchestra, along with three singers with Cape Cod ties, and inviting Scrooge, schoolkids and the Chatham Chorus along, too, Pak found a way to include the favorites and mix in lots of surprises as well.

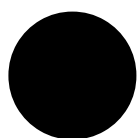
Transplanted Cape Codder Monica Rizzio made "Let It Snow" sound a little forced, but "Santa Will Find You" organically explored her native Texas roots, sounding sweet and homey. Martha's Vineyard native Siren Mayhew showed a truly warm contralto with "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," and was joined by the children from Eddy Elementary for an rousing reading of John Lennon's "Happy Xmas" ("and so this is Christmas").

Hyannis' own Kate McGarry joined her husband, stylish guitarist Keith Ganz, for Joni Mitchell's noir holiday folk tune, "River" ("it's coming on Christmas"), a nice antidote to the nonstop cheer. A "Jingle Bells meet John Philip Sousa" arrangement — the pairing actually worked — closed out the opening half of the program.

Scrooge visited after intermission, in his completely repentant state. Actor Neil McGarry grabbed the audience's attention and didn't let go, with an enthusiastic monologue from Dickens' famous Christmas tale. This nonmusical bit might have been the highlight of the show.

The three soloists all returned to harmonize together, and with the Chatham Chorale. A nice instrumental excerpt, featuring the orchestra's string principals, of Corelli's "Christmas Concerto" let concertmaster Jae Cosmos Lee show his leadership skills.

"A Celtic Nativity," "I Saw Three Ships" and "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" all got full-throated, harmonized renditions. Of the soloists, Mayhew was the greater of equals, with a stirring, vibrato-laden belt-out of "O Holy Night" ringing through the auditorium.



**SIGN UP FOR DAILY E-MAIL**

Wake up to the day's top news, delivered to your inbox

---