



Chamber orchestra debuts with poetry-themed concert

By Keith Powers / Contributing Writer

Posted at 6:00 AM

Matthew Scinto, music director and founder of the new Cape Cod Chamber Orchestra, has all the ingredients, and now it's time to test his recipe.

The ingredients include training, as a conductor. Lots of professional musicians. A love of poetry. A love of music, old and new. A sense of adventure, and the energy to tackle many non-musical tasks. A new home.

And most relevant to the debut of the **Cape Cod Chamber Orchestra**, the feeling that there is a need for something new.

Matthew Scinto, the orchestra's music director and founder, has all the ingredients, and now it's time to test his recipe. His newly formed orchestra will make its debut on Sunday at the Pilgrim Congregational Church in Harwich Port. The initial CCCO program will be "Here at the Edge of the Sea," celebrating National Poetry Month, with music from Mahler, Debussy and Elgar. There's also a new work, setting the poetry of the Cape's own Judith Askew to music composed by Francis Snyder.

"I want to find a way to bring everyone together, all the different arts organizations on the Cape," Scinto says. "I love the community music-making aspect, and I hope the chamber orchestra can offer more professional performances here."

Scinto studied conducting at Boston University, working under Stefan Asbury and David Hoose. He also received training at the prestigious Tanglewood Music Center, and now also serves as assistant conductor of the Boston Civic Symphony.

He's new to the Cape – "I moved to Brewster six months ago," he says – and has taken a position as director of the handbell choir at Pilgrim Congregational. "I work here – the church has a longstanding handbell tradition – and I love the space we're going to perform in." And he's optimistic that there's a void to be filled in the Cape's classical music offerings, and that he and his new ensemble can fill it.

"I hope to offer a different perspective," he says. "I'm not just about making this a contemporary music group – some of this music is 150 years old. For this first concert, the equation includes a new piece, and a poet, and maybe that can be the catalyst to bring different people to the concert."

Snyder's piece add music to three poems from Cotuit resident Askew's collection "Here at the Edge of the Sea." The settings are entirely instrumental, but Askew will read the poems before the start of the work. "We decided that would be cooler, and freer for the listener – to have her read them, rather than to just have them printed in the program," Scinto says. "It's a different kind of experience.

"I also think that people have a preconceived notion of what contemporary music sounds like.

There are a lot of different composers, and this music can affect you emotionally. Really, if it's not doing that, I have no interest in it.

"The rest of the program is an homage to poetry with songs, and with instruments," he says. Mezzo-soprano Zaray Rodriguez will join the orchestra for Mahler's "Songs of the Wayfarer," and the CCCO will perform Claude Debussy's "Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun," which was inspired by Stephane Mallarmé's poem, "Afternoon of a Faun," Scinto points out. The program also includes Edvard Grieg's "Holberg Suite," and Edward Elgar's "Chanson de Nuit" and "Chanson de Matin."

"Elgar's songs are beautiful pieces – songs without words," Scinto says. "I like the concept and the music. And 'Songs of a Wayfarer' is one of my own favorites.

"I want to highlight what's possible on the Cape," he says. "I think the sky's the limit in bringing a different side of the art form to the community."

Entertainment & Life

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