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REVIEW

Falmouth orchestra takes on ambitious program



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Bach brings out the best in all of us. At least musicians feel that way, and the Falmouth Chamber Players Orchestra worked hard Sunday afternoon to show everyone why that's true.

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In Concert

What: Falmouth Chamber Players Orchestra

When: Saturday and Sunday afternoons

Where: United Methodist Church, Gilford and Jones Road, Falmouth

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By Keith Powers Contributing writer

Posted Apr. 4, 2016 at 4:51 PM

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FALMOUTH – Bach brings out the best in all of us. At least musicians feel that way, and the Falmouth Chamber Players Orchestra worked hard Sunday afternoon to show everyone why that's true.

The orchestra, under the precise direction of conductor John Yankee, gave a wide-ranging performance at the United Methodist Church in Falmouth. The program, including Beethoven, Bach and Johann Strauss Jr., stretched the range of the chamber ensemble in ambitious directions.

Yankee opened the afternoon with the major work of the concert: Beethoven's Second Symphony. Completed and premiered at the very end of the composer's early period (1802-03), the Second is the last of Beethoven's symphonies that can be tackled by a chamber orchestra. After this, instrumentation grows more complex, as does the music, and Beethoven's sound-world starts to demand larger forces.

This performance had its challenges and rewards. There was consistently strong playing from the winds and horns – principals on flute (Lorrie Hassan) and oboe (Melanie Hayn) stood out in the scherzo – and the horns played with confidence. The strings worked to achieve consistent, unison intonation but definitely warmed up after the first movement, finding a groove, especially in the forte tutti sections.

It was a pleasure to hear a Beethoven symphony with smaller forces. All the Beethoven symphonies typically get the same orchestral treatment – aggressive, full-bodied sound – but it is important to remember the composer at this stage in his compositional life, when the early influences of Haydn and Mozart still appeared noticeably in his scores.

Bach's Double Concerto (BWV 1060R) for oboe and violin is one of those retrofitted works: The only existing score is one the composer re-wrote for two harpsichords, but the range of that composition clearly indicates that he originally intended it for the two other instruments.

It's a beautiful work, and the ensemble came alive. The soloists were Dan Flonta on violin and Hayn on oboe, and the orchestral support for the duo was enthusiastic.

The middle adagio movement stood out. Hayn carved out a long oboe line that never really paused throughout the movement; Flonta soon joined in for an elegant duet, and the ensemble played pizzicato behind them. Yankee more or less let his players take over, only raising his baton for changes in dynamics or for entrances.

Hardly any orchestra plays music of the Waltz King, Johann Strauss Jr., anymore. It's a shame. His "Tales From the Vienna Woods" is a marvelous, intricate work that celebrates the roots of the waltz form, re-working its rustic origins into a sophisticated setting.

Yankee played the solo zither part (here on hammered dulcimer), adding to the richly enhanced orchestra flavors that included piccolo, bass and snare drums and triangle. After the lengthy introduction to the work, principal cello Brian Kruse soloed smartly, and, further on, Hassan had another brightly turned flute solo.

Members of the Falmouth Chamber Players Orchestra next perform at the Spring Musicale at Cape Conservatory in Falmouth on May 15. For more information, visit [www.falmouthchamberplayers.org](http://www.falmouthchamberplayers.org) or call 508-274-2632.



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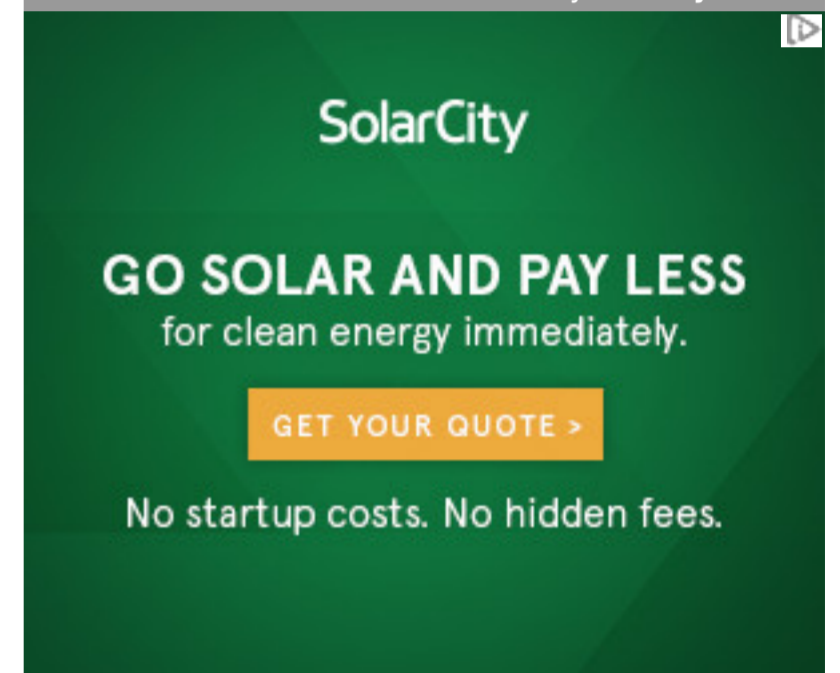
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