



Flutist Sheets plays with elegance, force

By Keith Powers / Contributing writer

Posted Jan 15, 2018 at 4:31 PM

Updated Jan 15, 2018 at 4:41 PM

A welcoming crowd, there to appreciate one of the Cape Symphony's finest instrumentalists, made the Nth Degree chamber series debut at Federated Church in Orleans a pleasant success Sunday afternoon.

ORLEANS – A welcoming crowd, there to appreciate one of the Cape Symphony's finest instrumentalists, made the Nth Degree chamber series debut at Federated Church in Orleans a pleasant success Sunday afternoon.

The series has rotated for four seasons among different venues on the Cape, but this modest hall seems like a great place to stay put. With the CSO's principal flutist Zach Sheets offering a well-rounded program, aided by guest pianist Wei-Han Wu, and Nth Degree director (and violinist) Jae Cosmos Lee as well, the audience for the sold-out show got a glimpse at the modest but intriguing flute chamber repertory.

As Sheets pointed out from the stage, the flute repertory is not as rich as the chamber works for piano or violin or cello, and so major pieces like Prokofiev's D major sonata, which formed the centerpiece of the program, get cherished. Sheets also showed the breadth of the instrument, including a four-movement Bach sonata, a Martinu trio, and Pierre Sancan's Sonatine.

Bach makes a fine beginning for most any program. The E major sonata, built primarily around dance styles (experts in the audience would recognize a polonaise and a rigaudon), also includes a frequently modulating slow movement. The multiple key changes made that Siciliano sound like a contemporary piece – shifting sound worlds quickly, restlessly. Wu supported ably, but this was Sheets' moment, the flute dominating confidently.

Pierre Sancan (1916-2008) is hardly a household name. But he mentored a generation of French pianists and also composed a number of standard pedagogical works used at the Paris Conservatory, where he taught for decades.

This duo sonatine, one movement but three moods, has standard forms, and well-developed parts for both instruments. Wu played smartly, especially introducing a second mood with a dramatic, minor-key run. Sheets has a virtuosic cadenza-like section, rushing the piece into its conclusion with a series of trills and

triple-tongued passages.

Lee joined the duo for Martinu's sonata, whose four angular movements were in contrast to Sancan's easy melodies. A scherzo – with a pizzicato opening and closing section, and an almost shockingly different middle trio, languorous and fluid – stood out.

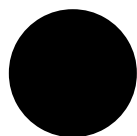
The concert was devoted to the Prokofiev duo sonata after intermission. The expansive ideas in the piece seem more suited to an orchestra than to flute and piano. Its four movements travel through elegy, humor and virtuosity, not just featuring the flute but including demanding passages for the piano as well.

The fact that it was later transcribed for violin – the flute part being complex enough to allow a violin to express it – speaks volumes about its difficulty.

It's fascinating to compare both versions –there are multiple performances by Prokofiev's famous Russian counterparts David Oistrakh (violin), Sviatoslav Richter (piano) and (Nicolai Kharkovsky (flute).

But Sheets rendered comparison moot: displaying his instrument as alternately lyric and aggressive, attacking phrases with elegance, but with force as well, he made this sonata seem like it belongs to flute, and to flute alone.

The next Nth Degree program will be March 11 in the Federated Church in Orleans, featuring music by Bruch, Beethoven and Brahms. Tickets and information: www.capesymphony.org or 508-362-1111.



SIGN UP FOR DAILY E-MAIL

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

Flutist Sheets plays with elegance, force

By Keith Powers / Contributing writer

Posted Jan 15, 2018 at 4:31 PM

Updated Jan 15, 2018 at 4:41 PM

A welcoming crowd, there to appreciate one of the Cape Symphony's finest instrumentalists, made the Nth Degree chamber series debut at Federated Church in Orleans a pleasant success Sunday afternoon.

ORLEANS – A welcoming crowd, there to appreciate one of the Cape Symphony's finest instrumentalists, made the Nth Degree chamber series debut at Federated Church in Orleans a pleasant success Sunday afternoon.

The series has rotated for four seasons among different venues on the Cape, but this modest hall seems like a great place to stay put. With the CSO's principal flutist Zach Sheets offering a well-rounded program, aided by guest pianist Wei-Han Wu, and Nth Degree director (and violinist) Jae Cosmos Lee as well, the audience for the sold-out show got a glimpse at the modest but intriguing flute chamber repertory.

As Sheets pointed out from the stage, the flute repertory is not as rich as the chamber works for piano or violin or cello, and so major pieces like Prokofiev's D major sonata, which formed the centerpiece of the program, get cherished. Sheets also showed the breadth of the instrument, including a four-movement Bach sonata, a Martinu trio, and Pierre Sancan's Sonatine.

Bach makes a fine beginning for most any program. The E major sonata, built primarily around dance styles (experts in the audience would recognize a polonaise and a rigaudon), also includes a frequently modulating slow movement. The multiple key changes made that Siciliano sound like a contemporary piece – shifting sound worlds quickly, restlessly. Wu supported ably, but this was Sheets' moment, the flute dominating confidently.

Pierre Sancan (1916-2008) is hardly a household name. But he mentored a generation of French pianists and also composed a number of standard pedagogical works used at the Paris Conservatory, where he taught for decades.

This duo sonatine, one movement but three moods, has standard forms, and well-developed parts for both instruments. Wu played smartly, especially introducing a second mood with a dramatic, minor-key run. Sheets has a virtuosic cadenza-like section, rushing the piece into its conclusion with a series of trills and triple-tongued passages.

Lee joined the duo for Martinu's sonata, whose four angular movements were in contrast to Sancan's easy melodies. A scherzo – with a pizzicato opening and closing section, and an almost shockingly different middle trio, languorous and fluid – stood out.

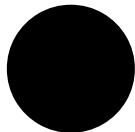
The concert was devoted to the Prokofiev duo sonata after intermission. The expansive ideas in the piece seem more suited to an orchestra than to flute and piano. Its four movements travel through elegy, humor and virtuosity, not just featuring the flute but including demanding passages for the piano as well.

The fact that it was later transcribed for violin – the flute part being complex enough to allow a violin to express it – speaks volumes about its difficulty.

It's fascinating to compare both versions –there are multiple performances by Prokofiev's famous Russian counterparts David Oistrakh (violin), Sviatoslav Richter (piano) and (Nicolai Kharkovsky (flute).

But Sheets rendered comparison moot: displaying his instrument as alternately lyric and aggressive, attacking phrases with elegance, but with force as well, he made this sonata seem like it belongs to flute, and to flute alone.

The next Nth Degree program will be March 11 in the Federated Church in Orleans, featuring music by Bruch, Beethoven and Brahms. Tickets and information: www.capesymphony.org or 508-362-1111.



SIGN UP FOR DAILY E-MAIL

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

ADVERTISING

MOST POPULAR STORIES

