

Cuyahoga Valley Chamber Players at Happy Days Lodge (June 19)

by J.D. Goddard



On Sunday, June 19, I put on my hiking boots, picked up my backpack, filled my canteen, loaded up on beef jerky, and journeyed out into the wilds of Cuyahoga Valley National Park to

hear the Cuyahoga Valley Chamber Players present a program of works by Jacob, Quantz, Dvořák, Roussel, Mozart, and Piazzola in the Happy Days Lodge.

Featured in this Summer Heritage Series was an exceptionally talented quartet of musicians from the Akron Symphony: flutist Jane Berkner, violinist Linda Nagy Johnston, violist Aaron Mossburg, and cellist Miles Richardson. The scenario made for a wonderfully up-close and intimate concert.

Four Fancies (Prelude, Gavotte, Incantation, and Folk Dance) by Gordon Jacob opened the program. Abundant tunes prevailed throughout the work, bringing immediate smiles to the faces of the audience and playfully whetting their appetites for the melodic content to come.

Johann Jacob Quantz's *Flute Quartet No. 2 in e* begins with an Allegro in the style of Bach. Its running sixteenth notes propel the movement along. The Grave, subdued and plaintive in flow and texture, was a standout. The finale, with its intricate fugue and gentle triplet twists, brought a climactic finish to this exceptional work.

Antonín Dvořák's eighteen *Cypresses* were originally written for voice and piano. CVCP played five of the twelve the composer later arranged for string quartet. Filled with Dvořák's intrinsic folk-romanticism, these pieces — performed by flute and strings — were the highlight of the concert. *Rallentandos*, *rubatos*, and *ritards* enhanced the flowing melodies with beautiful and heart-rending soulfulness.

The second half of the program opened with Albert Roussel's *Trio*, Op. 40, a work influenced by Ravel and Debussy. The bouncy Allegro grazioso transitions between light and dark tonal colors. The Andante begins with cello and viola spinning a wandering melodic line that occasionally finds a resting place and ends with an exquisite final cadence. The finale is infused with flying fingers, contrasting styles, and harmonic logic.

Mozart's *Flute Quartet No. 1 in D* is quite a contrast to the Roussel, yet it fit perfectly into the program. The tempo of the opening Allegro moved along rapidly, and flutist Jane Berkner brought a solid technique to the fray. The Adagio featured a languid melodic motif that gently flowed outward, leading immediately into the Rondeau.

The program ended with Astor Piazzola's wonderfully rhythmic *Libertango*. Its quirky tango rhythms and engaging melodic content provided a rousing finale to the evening's performance. The appreciative audience applauded loudly for these excellent musicians and their wonderful selection of repertoire.

The Heritage Concert Series at Happy Days Lodge continues on July 14 at 8:00 pm with a performance by Cleveland Orchestra musicians Isabel Trautwein, violin, Yun-Ting Lee and Yu Jin, violas, and Tanya Ell and Paul Kushious, cellos.

Published on ClevelandClassical.com June 29, 2016.

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