

Kent/Blossom Faculty Recital: the last of five on July 27

by Alexandra A. Vago



July 27th marked the last of five faculty concerts featured in the Kent/Blossom Music Festival, Kent State's summer partnership with The Cleveland Orchestra for nearly fifty years. The highlight of the evening in Kent State's Ludwig

Recital Hall was the beautifully executed second half, featuring two intimate cello sonatas performed by cellist Richard Weiss and pianist Joela Jones.

After a few brief speeches by festival director Charles Latshaw and artistic coordinator Danna Sundet, the concert began with an arrangement of Ennio Morricone's *Gabriel's Oboe*. It featured Sundet on oboe, with Weiss on cello and Jones on piano in an arrangement by Erik Sundet. Many have come to know this piece through its use in the 1986 film *The Mission*. Sundet's playing soared beautifully and expansively as if she had donned the Archangel's wings. The sharing of musical line between the cello and oboe brought sentimental nuance to this arrangement.

In place of program notes, Sundet introduced Carl Reinecke's *Trio for Oboe, Horn, and Piano*, noting that this instrumentation was rather progressive. Hornist Alan DiMattia joined Sundet and Jones for the performance. The performers exuded heroic stoicism amidst the fullness and depth of character in the second movement. It was striking at times how well the pairing of oboe and horn blended. Unfortunately, some of the work's nuance was lost due to imbalances and a limited dynamic range. Despite the group's excellent technique, its overall effect lacked the cohesion and effervescence that can be found with musicians who regularly perform together.

After intermission, Richard Weiss and Joela Jones offered Debussy's *Cello Sonata* (1915) and Samuel Barber's *Cello Sonata* (1932) in performances that sparkled with clarity and color. The duo exemplified the altruistic nature of chamber music: two soloists sublimating their egos for the greater good, standing stronger together than alone.

Jones's deftness and precision were impeccable, and Weiss's playing was robust. His seamless, never-ending bow control was striking, and his judicious use of vibrato and non-vibrato was both intimate and cerebral.

An ineffable characteristic permeates much of the music produced and created between the two World Wars. Weiss's conscious gradation of vibrato and Jones's purposeful articulations drew the audience into the illogicality and paradox of the era.

In past years, the Kent/Blossom Faculty Series concerts were advertised with delightful themes to whet the appetite of the listener. The only apparent threads woven through tonight's performance were the amicable performances and the sharing of the stage by Kent professors and Cleveland Orchestra members. The evening culminated in a reception that offered the performers, audience, and Kent/Blossom participants an opportunity for celebration and fellowship.

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