

## BlueWater Chamber Orchestra at Pilgrim with Jinjoo Cho (Nov. 24)

by Daniel Hathaway



BlueWater Chamber Orchestra played the second of two identical weekend programs on Sunday afternoon, November 24 on the free Arts Renaissance Tremont series, a performance that featured violinist Jinjoo Cho in a spirited reading of the Tchaikovsky Concerto, and rarely heard works by Robert Schumann and Thomas Adès with Daniel Meyer at the helm.

Cho has been a regular and a favorite on the Tremont series, and Pilgrim United Church of Christ was packed with enthusiastic listeners for the occasion. She made her first notes in the Tchaikovsky sing out with dark but smiling tone, and took such a commanding role in the rest of the first movement that a spontaneous ovation broke out.

Her elegant voicing, passionate lyricism, and flawless harmonics graced the rest of the concerto. The orchestra stayed neck in neck with the soloist, even when Cho wanted to press forward in the *Allegro vivacissimo* finale.

The concerto ended the concert, which began with Schumann's *Overture, Scherzo, and Finale*, a wannabe symphony that merely lacks a fourth movement. Its dramatic opening movement is followed by a Scherzo that celebrates the composer's mania for dotted rhythms, and a Finale that mixes dotted rhythms with chorale-like textures. The Orchestra made a strong case for the work, which deserves more exposure.

Thomas Adès' *Three Studies from Couperin* are re-imaginings he made in 2006 of François Couperin's harpsichord pieces *Les Amusemens*, *Les Tours de Passe-passe*, and *L'Âme-en-Peine*. More than simple adaptations for chamber orchestra, the studies add a layer of modernity on top of Couperin's ornate, understated character pieces.

“Les Amusemens” is dark and undulating, the amusements in this case arising from low-pitched instruments. “Sleight of Hand” incorporates some Stravinskian gestures, and “The Soul in Torment” is goaded by a bass drum. Fun to hear — and to imagine the Couperin that lies underneath — the *Studies* might usefully be reordered so as not to end as lugubriously as they now do.

The BlueWater musicians sounded splendid in the domed sanctuary of Pilgrim Church. Unfortunately, spoken remarks by ART artistic director Chris Haff-Paluck and conductor Daniel Meyer got lost when they both at one point gave up on recalcitrant microphones and tried to make themselves heard in the space.

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