

July 06, 2005

## **A WCM winner**

**By Marcus Kalipolites**

For the Times Herald-Record

Hortonville – There's always a certain air of imminence when a composer explains his music to an audience. Such was the case in the first of three concerts produced by the Weekend of Chamber Music. In Saturday night's presentation at the Hortonville Presbyterian Church, Nicholas Maw introduced and spoke about the origins of Roman Canticle for baritone, flute, viola and harp.

Based on Robert Browning's "Two in the Campagna," this 1989 work as described by Maw is a passionate love poem about a writer and his lady friend in Rome. And passionate, indeed, was the performance by baritone Aaron Engebret. While romantic moods course through every verse, it was Maw's music and Engebret's interpretation that combined to enhance the impact of Browning's poem.

Accompanied by flutist Judith Pearce, violist Sunhae Anna Lim and harpist Susan Jolles, the vocalist captured, with deep emotional feeling, a wide range of nuances, from dreamlike phrasing on the word "air" to vibrant intensity on "infinite passion."

Engebret was also featured in Five Songs for baritone and harp by Samuel Barber. With animated voice in "The Daisies" to solemn expression in "With rue my heart is laden" to robust delivery of "O God He Knows" in "Bessie Bobtail," the soloist deliberated each piece for maximum effect.

In addition to the easy-to-assimilate vocal music, Arthur Lourie's "La Flute a Travers le Violon" created an interesting variety of dialogues by juxtaposing two instruments similar in range and timbre. In the allegretto, violinist Lim underscored Pearce's flute passages with repetition of a short motif. Against slow-moving double stops by Lim in the adagio, Pearce floated jauntily above. With solid technique by both, the presto movement was marked by spunky flute playing, vigorous bowing by the violinist and the final single pizzicato by Lim.

In Bach's Partita in E major, for solo violin, Lim exhibited a graceful singing quality in the opening loure, while she turned more physical and her music was more expansive in the following menuet.

In Sonata for flute, viola and harp by Debussy, Pearce, Lim and Jolles were well-attuned to one another as they provided unobtrusive support for their solo passages. The flutist's sauntering solo set the mood for the opening pastorale. In the interlude, it was the harpist's arpeggios and sweeps that stood out. In the final movement, the effect of aggressive pizzicatos on the viola were heightened by harp rumblings. Thus, combining a sense of balance with solid technique, the talented trio brought the concert to a spirited close.

### **If you go ...**

What: Summer Festival of Concerts by the Weekend of Chamber Music

Where: No. 2 at Sullivan County Museum, Hurleyville

When: 8 p.m. July 9

Where: No. 2 at Shadowbrook Resort, Tunkhannock, Pa.

When: 3 p.m. July 10

Where: No. 3 at Big Twig Studio, Roscoe

When: 8 p.m. July 16

Where: No. 3 at United Methodist Church, Central Valley

When: 3 p.m. July 17

Tickets: \$25

Call: 932-8414