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## **Following the flight of the flute in a Hortonville concert**

*CONCERT REVIEW: Judith Pearce was instrumental in staging an engrossing Weekend of Chamber Music concert Saturday in Hortonville.*

**By Marcus Kalipolites**

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Grammy-nominated flutist Judith Pearce of Sullivan County and New York City likes the challenge of playing tour de force compositions.

In a concert Saturday night at the Presbyterian Church of Hortonville, the founder and director of Weekend of Chamber Music took her capacity audience on a musical journey through "Night Thoughts." In this piece for solo flute, composer Nicholas Maw would have the listener believe that he has captured the emotions of nocturnal tossing and turning through a wide range of musical events.

Reflecting this restlessness is a piece of fluctuating moods that Pearce performed with dramatic flair. Among the contrasting episodes through which she ebbed and flowed were graceful melody and agitated phrases, buzz sounds and breathy high tones, and rapid runs, frantic melodic leaps and sudden stops.

But if Maw's "Night Thoughts" projected roller-coaster images through idiomatic flute writing, Arthur Foote's "A Night Piece for Flute and String Quartet" invited serene and idyllic playing by Pearce. In the movielike atmosphere-music, she was joined by violinists Mark Steinberg and Serena Canin, violist Misha Amory and cellist Nina Maria Lee, who contributed to the pleasant ambiance with finessed playing and balance.

For its part, the Brentano Quartet was featured in the diversified program with three other works. It opened the concert with Fugue No. 1 from Bach's "The Art of the Fugue." As the bible for contrapuntal writing, this compendium of 15 fugues and four canons deals with the ideal application of melodic and rhythmic independence in part-writing. And in each of Nos. 1, 4 and 9, the Brentano players savored the distinctive textures with effective control and balance in subject, answer, countersubject or free counterpoint

From contrapuntal to classical, the Brentano in its performance of Haydn's String Quartet in E flat major, Opus 33, No. 1, was effective in both ensemble playing and clarity of expression.

Rounding out the concert was Dvorak's String Quartet in E flat major, Opus 51, a meaty piece with nationalistic overtones. Especially engaging was the second movement where, following a melancholy melody with guitar-like strummings on the cello, the players took on the bright and cheerful Slavonic dance episodes with unrestrained body English.

After the expansive and engrossing third movement, "Romance," the players breezed through the several dynamic changes of the fourth movement with robust excitement.