

CLASSICAL MUSIC REVIEW



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# Classical music from the heart and head

Fourth annual 'Music From Land's End' festival ends with music from other lands

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MARION - The head and heart of a very talented musical couple enriched the closing concert of the Music From Land's End festival Friday, July 31, in Marion's St. Gabriel's Church, which repeated he next day in Wareham's Church of the Good Shepherd. A concert was given July 30 at Wareham Free Library to benefit the library, as well.

This year in its fourth incarnation, the festival - presented by violinist Ariadne Daskalakis (heart), her husband composer/violist Sebastian Gottschick (head), their colleagues at the Cologne Conservatory, and other musical friends - always rewards and challenges its audiences in equal measure.

Chamber music concerts don't usually offer Claude Debussy's "String Quartet, Op. 10," as a curtain raiser. Written in 1893 early in Debussy's career, it set out a new path, combining colourful impressionist harmonies with an organic, cyclic motivic structure. It is commonly regarded as a watershed in the history of chamber music. Daskalakis and her husband were joined by her former student, violinist Andria Chang, who gave an incandescent performance of Salvatore Sciarrino's "Per Mattia" last year, and cellist Paige Riggs in a performance that showed off the ensemble's combined strengths, as well as individual qualities, especially in the last movement, where each player had shining moments in the sun.

Another monument of chamber music, Franz Schubert's four-hand piano "Fantasy in F Minor, D. 940," provided a satisfying



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textural contrast to the Debussy. Written in the last year of Schubert's life and dedicated to an unrequited love, this work, though constrained by a single keyboard, is, as Daskalakis said, written like a symphony. Nina Tichman and colleague Anthony Spiri demonstrated their rapport as pianists, but with intriguingly different touch, as they brought out its rich musical gestures and emotional range.

After intermission, the audience was challenged by J.S. Bach; well, not Bach exactly, but by the world premiere of Gottschick's take on the puzzle canons from the "Musical Offering," Bach's amazing response to a chromatic theme offered for improvisation by Frederick the Great. The canons are works of rigorous counterpoint realized with the help of changing technical formulas. Gottschick uses the canons, which are already an intellectual feat - like a chess grandmaster playing games against himself in his head - and adds to the puzzle, overlaying them against each other with multiple articulations while preserving the resulting polyrhythms. It seems as if Bach might be losing his way before rediscovering a musical solution. As the music emerged into an

arrangement for keyboard and string quartet of the Ricercar á 6 from the same work, Frederick's challenge was brought forward into the 21st century in a thought-provoking way.

After the Gottschick premiere, the strings, with pianist Tichman, sang their way through Antonin Dvorák's Piano Quintet in A Major, Op. 81. This ebullient work was written only five years before the Debussy string quartet but is in a different sound world altogether. If we didn't know that Dvorák had not yet travelled to the United States, we might think that the lyrical melodies were American in origin, not imitative of or lifted from Bohemian folk music. The opening theme always reminds me of "I've Been Working on the Railroad" and the start of the finale of a Western barn dance. Especially poetic was the Dumka movement, with its contrast of melancholy and uplift. Throughout, the music was enlivened by the heartfelt violin playing of Daskalakis, the warm responses of Chang and Riggs, the robust, open pianism of Tichman, and the clear-headed playing of violist Gottschick, who is always an advocate of the composer in any work he plays.

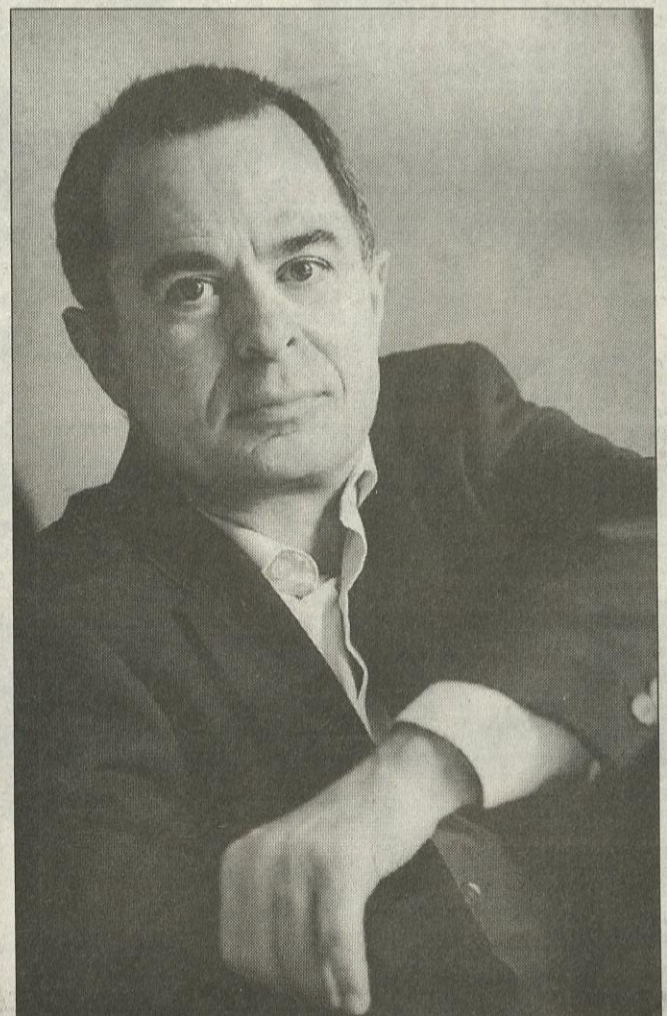
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