

Opinion

# New Music Performed

ÁLVARO BERTRAND

The New Music in the Hamptons concert at the Bridgehampton Presbyterian Church Saturday night presented several world premieres by Redjeb Jordania and Stephen Dickman. Both composers live in Springs.

The first part of the program, devoted to Redjeb Jordania, opened with three colorful piano pieces on interpretations of the Chinese Book of Changes, the I Ching. This tasteful and accessible work was impregnated with strong reminiscences of the impressionistic style of Debussy as well as Ravel.

Nice chord progressions accompanied a constant search of mostly lyrical and enjoyable melodies. The pianist, Joseph Kubera, had a beautiful sound and a clear understanding of the style.

### Seeming Fantasy

The second piece, "The Last Adage," for violin and piano, also was lyrical — an expressive seeming fantasy with dramatic overtones. It reminded me of the late pieces of Cesar Franck with its dreamy and meandering melodies.

This was a piece I could have listened to many times not only for its own compositional merits but also because it was very well performed by the composer at the piano and the violinist, Gregor Kitsis. His secure intonation and beautiful sound very much enhanced the character of the work. *magnificently delivered*

The last of the Jordania pieces was a world premiere of a song cycle, "Letters From the Floating Worlds," set to poems by Siv Cedering, a writer and painter who lives in Amagansett.

### Lost Lyricism

These five lovely songs tastefully exploited the mid-register of the soprano soloist, Lori Nassif. She skillfully projected the message and the music with impeccable diction within the conservative style of this work.

Redjeb Jordania's music seemed to be of endlessly searching for a lost lyricism, something we are grateful to find amidst the abrasive and computerized contemporary-classical music world nowadays. Mr. Jordania's works may lack the wide scope of late 20th century compositional techniques, but I admire the fact that he doesn't have to "brake the world" to write enjoyable and tasteful music.

### Personal Vocabulary

The second part of the concert brought us music by Stephen Dickman. The first piece was the 1983 "Trees and Other Inclinations," inspired by the "geometry and endless counterpoint of the skeletal branches" outside the composer's house. This is uncomplicated and effective piano writing with a very personal vocabulary.

Tastefully selected coloristic harmonies help to achieve diversity in this accessible, unified, and well-crafted "character piece." I would have liked to hear more in this style, and I hope the composer will consider this a future option.

Mr. Kubera performed "Trees and Other Inclinations" with exuberance.

### Stephen's Prayer!

The second piece, "If There Were No Birds," is a seamless dialogue between the fiddle and the voice, in which the violin carries the flow of the music and the soprano punctuates her comments with timely and reflective pauses, which give an almost mournful quality to the music. The work displays vibrant lyrical writing for the middle register of the soprano.

However, I kept hoping the composer would expand the almost constant middle-range tessitura of the soprano part so that we could enjoy even more the superb sound quality in the voice of Elizabeth Henreckson-Farnum.

"Rabbi Nathan's Prayer," also for soprano and violin, was the third Dickman piece and another of the world premieres. In my opinion, it really was Stephen Dickman's prayer!

### Beautiful Rendering

What a beautiful, solemn, and musical rendering of a humble plea. The respectful sensual lyricism inherent in the music was enveloped by an aura of devotion magnificently delivered by Elizabeth Henreckson-Farnum and Gregor Kitsis.

The concert ended with another world premiere, this one of three duets for two sopranos, set to quatrains of Rumi, the 12th century mystic. The work gracefully exposes Mr. Dickman's compositional gift for writing cute miniatures.

Judging from the good-sized audience, the East End is ready for more new music. We need to let music lovers of all ages know that we have, here in the Hamptons, very talented composers capable of great new music for all mediums — new music that can't wait to be liked and enjoyed and that, when well-performed, thoroughly succeeds.

Mr. Bertrand is a composer and music professor who lives in East Hampton.

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