

Reprinted from Lehigh Valley Source at  
[http://indiemusic.typepad.com/lehigh\\_valley\\_source/](http://indiemusic.typepad.com/lehigh_valley_source/)

8/10/2009

## **Valley Vivaldi Series' Third Concert Delights with Works of Lesser-Known Composers**

By STEVE SIEGEL

Special to Lehigh Valley Source

One of the pleasures of the Valley Vivaldi Summer Chamber Series presented by the Pennsylvania Sinfonia Orchestra is hearing the works of lesser-known composers. And the third in the series—performed at Wesley Church, Bethlehem, Pa., on Sunday, Aug. 9—was no exception.

Ferdinando Carulli is a well-known name to most classical guitarists, but not to the rest of us, and that's a shame. His Duet in C Major, Op. 137, is not only scored for the unusual combination of guitar and viola, but sounds more like a collection of Rossini opera arias than a chamber work of standard sonata form. Guitarist John Arnold and violist Agnes Maurer played this lively piece splendidly, delicately uncovering its rich lyricism and operatic flash.

Jan Krutitel Jiri Neruda's Concerto for trumpet, strings, and continuo in E Flat was a potpourri of regal grandeur, precise attacks, and lovely trills. Trumpet soloist Lawrence Wright was in top form, his self-penned cadenzas soared with spirited flourishes, his tone at once bright and velvety smooth.

Flutist Robin Kani and violinist Rebecca Brown were the soloists in Telemann's Concerto a 6 for flute, strings, and continuo. While the opening movement was sufficiently bouncy and vigorous, the real treat was the second adagio, where the soloists performed a beautiful slow duet, as graceful as a dance, against a background of pizzicato strings. Brown excelled in the rapid-fire presto, and Kani returned the fire in the rousing, fast-paced concluding allegro.

Brown and Mary Ogletree were the featured soloists in Vivaldi's Trio Sonata for two violins and continuo, performed in antiphonal style, with the two violinists performing at opposite sides of the stage. This was a clever piece, if little more than a novelty, where one soloist merely echoed the phrases of the other, with not much depth or embellishment.

The featured work in the program was Bach's famous Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 in D Major. The spotlight was clearly on harpsichordist Allan Birney throughout this thoroughly engaging performance. To hear the instrument move from a mere part of the continuo in the beginning of the first movement into the limelight with a long, glorious cadenza at the end was a joy. The second movement trio of Kani on flute, Ogletree on violin, and Birney was especially lovely, the harpsichordist's virtuosity and flourishes continuing into the spirited conclusion.

*Steve Siegel is a freelance writer living in Fogelsville, Pa.*