

Wednesday, December 19, 2018

## **DSO Welcomes the Holiday with Chamber Music Duo**

By Christine Facciolo

Chamber music continued Tuesday, December 11, at the Gold Ballroom at the Hotel du Pont, featuring Delaware Symphony Orchestra principals David Southorn, violin and Lura Johnson, piano. Southern prefaced the performance by saying that he and Johnson had been looking forward to the concert for more than a year.

The fruits of their partnership were abundantly evident in the program featuring works by Beethoven, Britten and Franck.

The duo opened the program with Beethoven's *Violin Sonata in G minor, No. 8, Op. 30, No. 3* which they played with such panache that it's doubtful whether anyone in the audience questioned why they didn't choose between the more famous Kreutzer and Spring sonatas.

This sonata, the last in the set, has a gorgeous inner movement that gave Southorn a beautiful melody which he rendered with a generous but light vibrato. Johnson teased our rhythms, finding every opportunity to every so slightly delay a beat. The final movement is like a folk dance, which the musicians cheerily performed.

There was an abrupt gear shift with the wit and quick-fire kaleidoscope of styles in Britten's *Suite, Op. 6, for Violin and Piano*. The March, which was played twice in place of the Moto perpetuo, was fearless, vigorous and playful. Southorn squeezed every bit of expression out of the sparse music of the Lullaby, giving a moving and personal performance. The Waltz was remarkably wild yet controlled with the playing always in sync.

The second half of the program was devoted to Franck's *Sonata in A major*. Composed in 1886 as a wedding present to violinist Eugene Ysaye, Southorn rendered it with all the warm lyricism the composer intended. The Allegretto ben moderato had the audience spellbound in a pastoral serenity.

A restless energy marked the second movement (Allegro) featuring biting attacks by Southorn. The virtuoso piano part, with its swirling arpeggios, was played with an equal measure of energy. After the recitative of the Recitativo-Fantasia, ben moderato, Southorn and Johnson showed their shared understanding of the beautiful Fantasia.

The final movement, the Allegretto poco mosso, had the violin and piano driving forward with ever mounting excitement, starting in canon and spiraling up to zealous heights of impassioned dialogue. Johnson's hands flew over the merciless chords, and as in the earlier selections, the two players seemed fearless and impetuous but always in control. This was a full-blooded rendering with conviction that earned them a well-deserved standing ovation.

See [www.delawaresymphony.org](http://www.delawaresymphony.org).

Posted by [Michelle Kramer-Fitzgerald](#)