

The Danish Pioneer: April 9, 2015

New York Scandia Symphony

Symphony Space

Broadway and 96th Street

Nielsen and Sibelius 150th Anniversary Concert

April 9, 2015 8pm.

Dorrit Matson, Music Director and Conductor

Lisa Hansen, flute

www.nyscandia.org

by Kirsten Vibe Philippides, New York Local Editor.

The New York Scandia Symphony which was established in 1988 by Music director Dorrit Matson has delighted audiences ever since with its programs of mostly Scandinavian classical and contemporary music. The concert venues vary from Symphony Space (its present home) on the Upper West Side to the Victor Borge Hall in Scandinavia House on Park Avenue as well as Fort Tryon Park for its outdoor concerts during the summer months. For a long period of time Dorrit and her symphony regaled the lunch crowd in Wall Street with concerts in the middle of the day.

This evening's program was dedicated to Carl Nielsen, Denmark's greatest composer and to Jean Sibelius who unquestionably is Finland's most famous and revered musical icon. Both were born year 1865.

The first piece, "Maskarade" is based on the comedy by Ludvig Holberg and was first performed in 1906. The overture (The Dance of the Cockerel} is one of Nielsen's most widely performed works at concerts in Europe and North America. It is an utterly charming piece, and one might imagine sitting in a chicken coop listening to all the chickens and roosters interacting.

The Flute Concerto with Lisa Hansen as a soloist is another well known piece and also well loved. We hear it in true Carl Nielsen form with elements of classical style interrupted by whimsical intermezzos. Lisa Hansen, a graduate of The Juilliard Music School, has concertized extensively in the U.S., Latin America and Europe. This piece is one of Ms. Hansen's favorites

and her brilliant performance was enthusiastically applauded. The bouquet of red roses which she received were richly deserved.

Dorrit Matson, the ever hardworking music director and conductor, is a native of Copenhagen and has impressed her audience with her interesting selections of Scandinavian composers, both a well known repertoire as well as presenting contemporary lesser known Scandinavian composers and works. She received her performance degree in conducting at the Royal Danish Academy of Music and a master's degree in musicology from the University of Copenhagen. Her master's degree in conducting was completed at the University of Miami, Florida.

The Jean Sibelius program began with *Pelleas et Melisande*. It is incidental music written in 1905 for Maurice Maeterlinck's 1892 drama of the same name. It has become one of Sibelius' most popular concert works.

The *Karelia Suite*, opus 11, is inspired by the Karelia province which Sibelius was particularly fond of. It is based on the folk music of this region and has a nationalistic character.

Finlandia, opus 26, is a symphonic poem and literally symbolizes the Russian Empire's increasing oppression of Finland's freedom. It premiered on July, 1900 with the Helsinki Philharmonic Society. It was performed as a tableau depicting episodes from Finnish history. Its gripping, monumental and emotional character often leaves the audience in tears.

(It is perhaps interesting that this concert was performed on April 9th, a date which forever is inscribed in Danish history because of the German invasion of Denmark many years later).

The large hall of Symphony Space was filled to capacity, and the excellent orchestra was greeted with enthusiastic and well deserved applause. The concert could easily have been extended by a piece or two as the audience obviously was very impressed by the performance.

Dorrit Matson will conduct her summer concerts during the month of June in the Fort Tryon Park near the Cloisters. They make a delightful summer picnic goal for friends and family.

Stay tuned to later information about these programs.