

## All Seasons Chamber Players Welcome Spring With Music

The All Seasons Chamber Players performed a program aptly titled “Spring Mix” Sunday afternoon at the Montgomery Senior Center in the Grand Montgomery Chamber Music Series. Once again, the free concert rewarded the capacity audience with an engaging performance of top classical music played by first rate instrumentalists. Now in its 34th season, the quintet is one of New Jersey’s most highly regarded and active chamber music ensembles. Their Sunday concert made listening to live music a living experience.

Violinist Robert Lawrence, cellist E. Zoe Hassman, pianists Jean Strickholm and Jacqueline Schiller-Audi were joined by flutist Lisa Hansen in a selection of works that program director Lawrence introduced with instructive and entertaining commentary.

The concert began with Friedrich Kuhlau’s Trio in G Major (1831) written a year before his death. A romantic work in three movements for piano, violin and flute it is delightful in its interchanges between keyboard, played by Schiller-Audi, and treble, from the opening allegro with its pianistic trills and whirling strings and flute flights. The adagio soars from solemn piano hymn-like chords to violin and flute heartfelt responses, closing with a quiet coda. The final rondo is high-spirited and all in a rush to reach a rousing climax, which the players did with a flourish.

Pianist Strickholm and cellist Hassman offered a set of engaging duets, starting with Tchaikovsky’s “Nocturne,” with its dark, haunting motif and aspiring, hopeful second theme. Their interpretation was expressive and impressive. In contrast, Charlie Chaplin’s “The Peace Patrol” is pure fun with its upbeat martial step and humorous tune, ending with a surprising pizzicato twist. “The Butcher’s Death” by Astor Piazzola is an Argentina tango with wild cello strumming and percussion knocked on wood, accompanied by racing keyboard scales. Faure’s “Sicilienne” is a thing of beauty with its heart-stopping cello melody and piano bass.

“Hip Hop House” by David Bruce brought happy listeners back to earth with its low growling notes and stomping rhythm.

After intermission, it was quartet time with pianist Strickholm joining in on Franz Doppler’s “Nocturne for Flute, Violin, Cello and Piano.” The andante is introduced in reverse order by the piano, followed by cello, violin and flute until they fuse in unison for a moving animato anthem. Cecile Chaminade’s Trio No. 2 (1888) featured pianist Schiller-Audi with

violin and cello in an ambitious three movement work full of excitement and drama. The allegro begins with a keyboard rush of sonorous full scales and cross-hand cadences on high and low registers answered by tremolo and treble strings. The plaintive lento features high violin strains echoed by low calming cello phrases. Thunderous chords announce the final allegro in which the composer shows her mastery of late romantic developments with piano and string speeding to pizzicato cello counterpoint for a rousing finish. The audience rewarded the players with a well deserved standing ovation.