

SweetWater 2018 AD Report

For

AGM – March 15, 2018

Overview: The 2017 year was another artistic success. Our list of guest artists continues to expand, with new faces and new creative ideas being given space for musical exploration alongside world-class performances of standard repertoire. As is often the case, our guest artists are surprised by the eagerness of our audiences to listen in the engaged way that they do.

February Concert and Workshops: The February concert featuring works of Daniel Janke played by the composer himself at the piano and AD Mark Fewer was a challenge for some of our audiences. Being unfamiliar repertoire (virtually brand new), this can often be the case. Interestingly, the repertoire performed was from a new release by the artists entitled “Celestial Blue”, which was nominated for best contemporary album of the year (West Coast Music Awards) one week following the Owen Sound performance. A piano masterclass given by Mr. Janke was attended by students preparing repertoire for local competitions, as well as singers who benefited from Mr. Janke’s experience as an award-winning record producer.

SweetWater Jazz – *Swingin’ Strings @ the Heartwood:* A winning combination of talents gathered for this high energy evening with a sold out crowd and a positive vibe that lasted in the community for months afterwards. Drew Jurecka, Nathan Hiltz, Joseph Phillips and Mark Fewer performed a jazz set in tribute to legends Joe Venuti and Stephane Grappelli with multiple surprises that left the audience wanting more. (They will return in April 2018 for a 2nd show at the Heartwood.) Though the artists all knew each other before this concert, the success of the event has inspired the group to produce a new recording together.

The September Weekend:

- 1) To begin the September weekend event in 2017, a star-studded night which included performances by John Novacek, James Campbell, Russell Braun, Carolyn Braun and Mark Fewer. Multiple standing ovations and a sold out crowd at Leith Church set the stage for the weekend to come. The repertoire consisted of mostly known works, but included a few Canadian songs sung by Braun. Many artists mentioned to the AD that the reception after the Leith Concert was excellent.
- 2) Saturday morning’s events began with a successful *Mozart for Munchkins* starring Edwin Huizinga and Duane Andrews at the Harmony Centre. Also at the Harmony Centre, the annual luthier exhibit took place, showcasing the talents of our many local luthiers who’s successes are worldwide. At 12 noon, our Classical Jam session was filled with as many performers as the space could handle. Performances of Haydn and Vivaldi with Guy Few joining in as guest soloist left everyone involved delighted. The Harmony Centre events ended with a performance on locally made instruments by Edwin Huizinga, Drew Jurecka, Amahl Arulanandam, Rory McLeod and James Campbell

performing the complete Mozart Clarinet Quintet for a receptive audience. During the performance, the string players changed their instruments between movements so that all luthiers would be represented.

- 3) Saturday night @ the Roxy was dedicated to all Canadian repertoire (!) in celebration of Canada 150. It began with a performance by Russell Braun, Carolyn Maule and Mark Fewer of a work by John Estacio (AB), followed by a duet with James Campbell and Aiyun Huang by Alexina Louie (ON) and a trumpet concerto for Guy Few and “The World’s Smallest Orchestra” by Matthieu Lussier(QC) entitled *Alameda*. To close the concert, a work by local composer Richard Mascal (ON) entitled *Kanata*. The all-Canadian evening proved incredibly successful both for the artists and the audience.
- 4) Saturday late-night @ Heartwood continued the Canadian music theme with performances of mostly Canadian-written songs by Duane Andrews (guitar) and a string ensemble. The venue was again quite electric and ended a long, enriching day.
- 5) Sunday afternoon’s finale @ The Roxy, entitled *Pianorama*, showcased the solo talents of our local piano star Kati Gleiser, and guest artist John Novacek. Both performed concerti with “The World’s Smallest Orchestra” in works by Mozart and Shostakovich. In between, the two pianists surprised the audience with a short duo by Brahms, to the delight of everyone. The last notes of the Shostakovich Concerto were barely played before the audience rose to its feet in enthusiastic applause and loud cheers.

Looking Ahead: The success of 2017 has (inevitably) led to many people asking the AD how he intends “to top that”. That such a question is regularly asked year after year, one might assume that the artistic state of SweetWater is strong.