

## Sacred sites in Harlem host chamber music programs

On two successive Sundays, concert-goers in Harlem had the opportunity to hear both the Antara Ensemble and Music at St. Mary's in programs of chamber music. The former took place on June 14 at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in East Harlem, and the latter was on June 21 at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in West Harlem.

For the final event in its 15th season, Antara offered a bright and festive program. It included Beethoven's "Serenade in D Major" (Opus 25), Mozart's "Quartet in D Major" (K. 285), Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson's "Black Forms for Solo Violin," Debussy's "Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp" and Dvorak's "American" Quartet, No. 12 in F Major (Opus 96).

The participants included artistic director and flutist Harold Jones, violinist Ashley Horne, violinist Mioi Takada, violist Orlando Wells, cellist Joanne Lin and harpist Karen Lindquist. Everything was executed with artistic integrity and style. I doubt if one could hear better performances in major venues downtown.

Music at St. Mary's, in the historic West Harlem Episcopal Church by the same name, opened its summer series last Sunday evening. The program included Mozart's Quartet in G Minor for Piano, Violin, Viola and Cello (K.478), Poulenc's Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano and Beethoven's String Quartet in G Major (Opus 18, No. 2).

The lovely sanctuary at St.

Mary's was a perfect place for this music. There was much beautiful playing from such fine players as Charles Dalton (violinist), Evelyn Golz (pianist), David Miller (bassoonist), Jim Ferraiuolo (oboiist), Esther Mellon (cellist), Curtis Stewart (violinist) and Orlando Wells (violinist). The audience rewarded them with enthusiastic applause.

Another important event was the master class conducted by the renowned coloratura soprano Osceola Davis last Saturday afternoon at Convent Avenue Baptist Church under the auspices of the Harlem Opera Theater. The participants were all winners of the opera company's 2009 vocal competition.

From the professional division were soprano Audrey DuBois (first place in both Judges and Audience Choice

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Awards) and tenor Seunghwan Oh (third place in the Judges Choice Award). From the college division was mezzo-soprano Flora Mendoza, second-place winner of the Judges Choice Award. They were all highly gifted.

It was a pleasure to watch

Davis share her mastery of singing technique and opera performance, acquired by many years as a major presence at the Metropolitan Opera, Theater im Gaertnerplace in Munich, the Royal Finnish Opera and elsewhere. This was a master class of the first order.

NOTE: On Sunday, June 28 at 2:30 p.m., soprano Shirley Stewart Farmer will offer "An Appreciation of American Song Masters" in the Adler Study Room at the Ethical Culture Society, 2 West 64th Street (corner of Central Park West). She will be assisted by Frank Owens (pianist), Lisle Atkinson (bassist) and Earl Williams (drummer). Call (212) 787-6566 for tickets.

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*For your files:  
Raoul Abdul*