

# Review: Grand Montgomery Chamber Music and Theatre Series concert

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MONTGOMERY — "Nepenthe" is the Greek word for an ancient herbal remedy that was a gift from the gods to humans. The name has been adopted by a musical trio and dancer who presented their program Sunday afternoon at the Senior Center as the season's first in the Grand Montgomery Chamber Music and Theater Series, created by Howard Garrett. Certainly the music and dancing delighted the audience whose final standing ovation was genuine and deserved.

Marybeth Hraniotis is trained in the Isadora Duncan tradition of interpretative dance, which blends ballet with children's play and freedom of movement. In white diaphanous silk, she becomes a swan or an awakening child, a sprite or angel on the wing. Ballet positions of port de bras with rotating extended arms, leaps of grand pas and poised attitudes become spontaneous inner responses to musical phrases that unfold from within. Three musicians — pianist Karen Vandenberg, cellist Avron Coleman and flutist Jacquelyn Pruiksmas — accompanied the dancing but also offered a rich program of their own trio repertoire.

Sonata in B minor by John Baptiste Loeillet is in four movements, with an opening largo on a soulful theme carried by the cello with figured bass on the keyboard and marked rhythm from the flute. A dance tune sets the allegro in motion, followed by a short and sweet adagio. The final allegro features the flutist soaring in the upper scales above the other instruments until all three join in a compulsive close. Chopin's Nocturne in C-sharp minor brought Hraniotis to the stage to dance to the solo piano. From a still, oval position she gradually let her arms extend in a waving motion with her hands fluttering and pointing to the action of her body leaping and turning across the floor. Chopin's measures elicited the physical counterpoint brightened by the dancer's radiant smile.

After a flute and piano duet with M.T. von Paradis' "Sicilienne" in slow, liquid passages, Hraniotis returned for Saint-Saens' "Le Signe (The Swan)," in which she emerged from an egglike position to a winged flight of gossamer speed and whirling spirals accompanied by piano and cello. Vivaldi's Sonata in E minor continued the duet, with the dancer appearing at the close like a blue butterfly that flutters and finally lies on the floor. She slowly rises during Fauré's haunting "Sicilienne" in a melodic trance that comes to life. For Moszkowski's "Guiturre," Hraniotis, dressed in red, swirled with red scarves in each hand that she snapped and oscillated to the rhythm.

After intermission, the trio played Piazzolla's "Cinco Piezas," a tuneful work in five parts that weaves its four-note variations in a rubato pattern. Caplet's "Reverie" found the dancer awakening and opening her arms to the world, reaching out gradually to embrace it. Piano and cello next offered Mozart's appealing minuet from his Sonatina No. 2 in A major. After dancing to Kreisler's "Schon Rosmarin (Fair Rosmarin)" in a sheer sunny yellow dress, Hraniotis stayed onstage to listen seated to Telemann's Trio in F major through the first vivace movement. Breathing quietly to a slow mesto, she then stands and stretches with uplifted hands, to break into action with the final allegro, skipping and twirling across the floor, until, like the goddess Flora, she flung rose petals on the stage and out to the happy audience.

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