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Sweet Music On a Lazy Summer Day

By Kassi Dougherty

The New York Scandia Symphony's concerts in Fort Tryon Park are a gift to the people of Upper Manhattan. What better way to spend a lazy Summer afternoon, than picnicking under the shade of two massive old oak trees on the Billing's Lawn, while enjoying live orchestral music?

Led by Danish conductor Dorrit Matson, who is also the group's founder and Music Director, this ensemble, many of whom live in the neighborhood, perform and promote Scandinavian music for the U.S. audience.

One of the things that makes New York City such a vibrant place is its cultural diversity, and the audience at this June 24th concert was no exception- a rich mix of New York City's people, with all ages too- even one from older people in sun hats, to toddlers running the length of the lawn, all of them coming together for the shared communal experience of live music.

The program began with Gustaviansk Svit, a suite for flute and orchestra, and one of the lesser known works of Swedish composer Lars-Erik Larsson. Lisa Hansen, with her wonderfully lyrical playing style, was the soloist.

One of the strengths of the Scandia Symphony is their choice of including pieces that are rarely heard in the concert repertoire. In that spirit, the next piece was the Suite For Violin and Strings Op. 117, by that great Finnish composer, Jean Sibelius. Violinist Mayuki Fukuhara, who is also the Concertmaster of the New York Scandia Symphony, played with wonderful strength and precision.

This was followed by 'Summer In Fort Tryon Park' by Frank Foerster who was there to introduce this charming work, and spoke to the audience about how wonderfully inspiring Fort Tryon Park and its people can be to an artist.

Closing the day's selections was a flute concerto by Johan Helmich Roman, a Swedish composer and contemporary of Handel. We were once again treated to the beautiful fluidity of Lisa Hansen's flute.

Fort Tryon Park, with its gorgeous flowers and majestic views of the Hudson river, is one of Manhattan's best kept secrets. You can stroll the tranquil Heather Gardens, then stay and watch the sunset behind the twinkling lights of the George Washington Bridge. And, if you're lucky, you can also hear some wonderful live classical music. A charming way to slow down and recharge on your Sunday off. In the hectic busy world we all live in now- especially in New York City- an afternoon of live classical music outdoors surrounded by trees and flowers is just the ticket!