

Artist Management

Rosa Lamoreaux
Sings Barber, Bernstein and Corigliano

"[she] didn't miss an ounce of Barber's iconoclastic wit... Lamoreaux's wealth of vocal timbres allowed her to choose the particular color undergirding the mood of each setting."

The Washington Post

Cantate Chamber Singers at St. Columba's Episcopal Church

Cecelia Porter, Published: June 5, 2011

On Saturday the [Cantate Chamber Singers](#)' adventurous program focused on American music by four of the 20th century's leading composers. These works do not often crop up in many concerts, but this type of program is up this group's alley. Last week the singers, headed by music director Gisele Becker, won the Most Creative Programming Award at Washington's second annual Ovation Awards.

Saturday's program at St. Columba's Episcopal Church highlighted an imaginative mixture of assorted vocal soloists, chorus and orchestra for music that draws somewhat on avant-garde techniques, more traditional styles and the personal musical idioms of individual composers.

The concert featured Lukas Foss's "Psalms," Samuel Barber's "Hermit Songs" cycle, Leonard Bernstein's "Missa Brevis" and John Corigliano's "Fern Hill." Soprano Rosa Lamoreaux didn't miss an ounce of Barber's iconoclastic wit pervading the spare, ever-changing moods of his medieval psalm settings. Lamoreaux's wealth of vocal timbres allowed her to choose the particular color undergirding the mood of each setting. Pianist Andrew Earle Simpson sensitively underlined her ever-changing characterizations.

With Lamoreaux as a soloist backed by a chamber orchestra, the 31 choristers offered a telling version of Corigliano's appealing yet harmonically bland "Fern Hill," set to the emotionally charged imagery of Welsh poet Dylan Thomas. Becker guided the ensemble through Corigliano's nostalgic evocations with sharp-edged dynamic contrasts. And she emphasized the resonance of clear vowel sounds to capture his fluid, sonorous textures. Lamoreaux tackled Corigliano's angular melodic leaps with seeming ease, reveling at times in her vibrant lower notes.

Becker's well-timed pacing and rhythmic incisiveness gave Bernstein's ever-present theatrical overtones a solid punch. Countertenor Roger Isaacs charged his solos with energy and mystical resonance. Simpson and Steven Alan Honley, at two pianos, ably accompanied the Cantate in Foss's brutally difficult "Psalms," though the chorus sounded under-rehearsed.

— Cecelia Porter