

Musical Treasure Chest #30

As we continue to absorb all of the unsettling news of the election aftermath and the simultaneous rise of COVID infections, I think life seems anything but normal. Over these last eight months as the world has struggled to find its path through the maze of safety and risk, caution and rashness, I believe having routines seems to help. Every week since mid-March Musicians of Ma'alwyck, in some iteration, has played a live-streamed mini-concert, called Musical Sanctuaries, from First Reformed Church in Schenectady. This church has been a home to Musicians of Ma'alwyck for many years, and the establishment of these weekly performances was a way for us to give back to the church. What I have realized over these more than 30 weeks is that it also provided us, the musicians, a sense of purpose, a way to share our music and a musical routine. Preparing for these concerts took time, from selecting repertory and practicing it, to rehearsing with the other musicians. Knowing that we would be seen and heard live kept us on our "game," assuring that we would continue to be in shape "chop-wise," and it even gave us the rare opportunity to put on our concert clothes.

As the number of COVID cases ramps back up, First Reformed Church has been forced to adopt much stricter protocols for being in the church in order to protect their congregation. These new procedures make it much more difficult to perform so MofM's last Musical Sanctuary for the time-being is November 22nd. We will truly miss our weekly musical virtual contact, and the fun and love that goes into preparing these programs. But we are in complete agreement with the necessity of protecting their members. I want to say how grateful we are to have been able for all these months to play for you, and how appreciative we are to First Reformed for the opportunity. We will be playing this week (a program of Franck and Mozart with Max Caplan and me), and we will be there on November 22nd with a Kurt Weill program (with my husband Fred Schwartz, soprano Jean Leonard and Max Caplan).

As a way of acknowledging the months of Musical Sanctuaries, I thought for today's Musical Treasure Chest I would offer you a piece of the wonderful music

that I discovered in preparation for the concerts. This is a piece that I will retain in my repertory and that I am delighted to have learned. I hope that you will enjoy it too!

Mozart wrote a large body of violin sonatas dating from the 1770s almost until the end of his life in 1791. As you traverse through them, they chronicle well his development as a composer, changing from brilliant examples of the early classical style to break-through pieces that are harbingers of the Romantic era. **Sonata K526 in A major** is from 1787 and was written immediately before his opera *Don Giovanni*. A three movement work with a whirlwind first movement in 6/8 time that showcases both the virtuosity of the pianist and the violinist; a second movement that offers a deceptively simple sounding melody that quickly transforms into intricate interplay between the two instruments, and a third movement that is in an extended sonata-rondo form with a middle section of great turbulence. I have selected a breath-taking performance by violinist Thomas Zehetmair and pianist Olli Mustonen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekUSxDQn7m4>