



2019 FLUTE FAIR GUEST ARTIST TRUDY KANE

Review by Jerry Pritchard

The flute society was treated on April 12, 2019, to a wonderful recital by our Flute Fair guest artist, Trudy Kane, at Portland State University's Lincoln Hall. It was so nice to hear this concert in a venue that was comfortable, attractive, and with good acoustics.

It was a beautifully balanced program, mostly from the 20th century, but varied in styles. Kane has an elegant demeanor and plays with complete confidence, always communicating her musical ideas clearly. Her playing also showed her long association with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. She has very solid and facile technique, with a consistent tone from bottom to top and a vibrato that is varied and intense, yet relaxed. Her interpretations were sure and convincing and her verbal introductions to each piece were meaningful.



Eldon Burton's *Sonatine* from 1948 is a big work despite its diminutive title. It showed off Kane's brilliant and super clean technique as she negotiated the difficulties with ease and brought out the interesting and unexpected harmonies. She was especially impressive in her playing of the many runs and the swirling, driving scale passages of the third movement, which she played with a clarity and fleetness of articulation.

Valerie Coleman's *Matisseries* for solo flute was written especially for

Kane and we were privileged to hear the world premiere. Based on impressions of four works by French painter Henri Matisse, Coleman emphasizes line and color in a way that is fresh and energetic, using scale fragments, modes, exotic scales, and the occasional interjection of whole tone scales. Much of this work is angular and full of leaps yet Kane was able to bring out its essential melos.

Bohuslav Martinu's *Sonata for Flute and Piano* from 1945 is in an unusual melodic and harmonic style that contrasts clean rhythmic lines and flowing yet angular melodies. Kane's performance utilized her

warm, rich tone to project the power and fullness of the work. The *Adagio* movement displayed her remarkable ability to shape phrases and make fine tapered endings of notes. This movement is mysterious and yet soaring with slow long-breathed lines which Kane made as smooth as silk.

In the Martinu's third movement, he features playful figures and diving arpeggios with a rambling interplay of the piano and the flute. Pianist Debra Huddleston was rhythmic and supportive throughout the recital, but especially shone in this challenging work. At the end of the concert, Kane expressed her pleasure in discovering that Huddleston was so capable and easy to work with in bringing off this recital with so little rehearsal time. Indeed, Huddleston seems to be able to play anything with little practice and she is the "go-to" person for many auditions, competitions, and student and professional recitals in the Willamette Valley. We are so fortunate to have her services.

Phillipe Gaubert's Third Sonata shows this master flutist, conductor, and composer at the height of



his abilities. He uses long, legato lines that are song personified; and here again Kane drew on her experience in accompanying opera to show off the subtle harmonies and melodies with shifting colors. Gaubert displays his knowledge and the influence of Claude Debussy's style and he is able to expand it to make exploratory and original material sound logical and controlled while exhibiting a freedom to write interesting melodies and harmonic structures, with whole tone scales floating by unexpectedly with Kane displaying her remarkably smooth legato technique.

Her ability to shade and color phrases was amazing and especially evident on long notes and in the tapering of phrases. She can make an endless decrescendo fading away to nothing while maintaining the pitch and going through a rainbow of colors. Kane's playing is both virtuosic and subtle.

The final work on the program was "Lenski's Aria" from Tchaikovsky's opera *Eugene Onegin*. This is a poetic work full of pathos and love. Kane just seemed (impossibly) to get better as the recital went on. And, again, her marvelous ability to shape phrases and make the musical line flow continued to impress. She sings and the flute is her voice. Her wellmodulated vibrato always matches the intensity called for by the melody and text of the aria. This beautiful arrangement by Guy Braunstein, which recently has been popularized by Emmanuel Pahud, is quickly becoming a staple of the flute repertoire as it combines the orchestral introduction and accompaniment with the vocal part in a way that is complete and satisfying. Kane played with a true legato and brought out the singing *bel canto* character of this piece beautifully.

This was a thoroughly enjoyable and impressive concert from beginning to end. Trudy Kane blessed us with a very moving set of works that demonstrated her mastery of the flute and her ability to make music. Bravo! and Encore!