

MUSIC CONSERVATORY OF SANDPOINT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Concert review: North Idaho Philharmonia Inauguration Concert**

On Friday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, at 7:30 pm, the newly formed "North Idaho Philharmonia" had its inaugural concert in the Panida Theater, located in Sandpoint, Idaho.

The orchestra, which is comprised of professional and world-acclaimed musicians along with a few local students, sounded superb under the baton of Artistic Director and Conductor Jan Pellant.

Jan is a world-class conductor, having conducted over 30 leading orchestras from all over the world. He has stunned audiences in his native country, the Czech Republic, conducting the Czech National Philharmonic Orchestra, the Prague Symphony Orchestra, and the North Czech Philharmonic Orchestra. He is also the former Music Director of the Lexington Chamber Orchestra, and the Coeur d'Alene Symphony.

The program for Friday's concert started with Corelli's Concerto Grosso #8 "Christmas", featuring concertmaster and main soloist Richard Altenbach. Richard is a sought-after Hollywood recording musician, having participated in more than a thousand film scores for over 25 years. He is a top-tier violinist, who has played the part of First Violin in the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Los Angeles Opera Orchestra, Joffrey Ballet, Houston Symphony Orchestra, and Hollywood Bowl Orchestra. Richard has performed live on the Academy Awards and The Tonight Show and has collaborated with Frank Sinatra, YoYo Ma, Barbra Streisand, Mannheim Steamroller and Puff Daddy among many others.

Altenbach played the Corelli's Christmas Concerto's swirling lines with crystal clarity, and with all of the phrases masterfully articulated, along with expressive dynamics.

The music then turned to Bach's Piano Concerto #4 in A major, with Daniel Beal as its soloist. Daniel is a 13 year-old pianist who has distinguished himself in many local and regional competitions, including winning 1<sup>st</sup> place in the 2020 and 2021 Washington MTNA Piano Competitions. In the pre-concert talk, maestro Jan Pellant asked Daniel what his approach was for the concerto, and Daniel said, "Well, for this piano concerto No.4, by Bach, I used more of a staccato, meaning detached, with silence between the notes, articulations, versus the legato, or connected articulation. It gives it more of a crisp sound. It simulates the harpsichord, which is the instrument that was used instead of the piano in Bach's period. I also add dynamics in this piece, to give it a more up-to-date modern feeling." Daniel played the concerto skillfully, and the applause at the end lasted 3-5 minutes.

After the intermission, the program continued with Respighi's Ancient Airs and Dances #3. Respighi pieced together themes from various 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century composers, including Giovanni Battista Besardo and Lodovico Roncalli, with the other composers being anonymous, to create this masterpiece. The piece is overall very well structured and was played well, with a minor imperfection on the spot when the orchestra wasn't completely together.

Next came Bela Bartok's Romanian Folk Dances, once again with Altenbach as its soloist. A fine work of art, the Romanian Folk Dances are 7 traditional Transylvanian tunes from Romania. The piece is about 7 minutes long, and Altenbach played virtuosically the entire time. The final few bars were played majestically, and the concert ended on an upbeat note.

But even more exciting than Friday's concert are Jan Pellant's plans for the future. According to Jan, the orchestra will continue to "promote young talent" and even have "some talented young artists conduct the Philharmonia, and also play some of their original compositions".

The concert was very beneficial for the local young musicians (many of them are from the Music Conservatory of Sandpoint just down the street). It was also good for the professional musicians around the area, who, because of COVID, did not get to perform a lot recently. Above all, it was great for the local public to experience an excellent orchestra from North Idaho performing in Sandpoint's favorite venue. If you missed the concert, the North Idaho Philharmonia is having its next one in March 2022. Also mark your calendars for the First Annual Sandpoint Chamber Music Festival, which is coming up on April 7-10, 2022.