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MUSIC REVIEW | CHAMBER ORCHESTRA OF NEW YORK

Season Finale With a Florentine Touch

By VIVIEN SCHWEITZER

New York's vibrant music scene is packed with ensembles of every type, but many worthy young musicians still struggle to find work. So the composer and conductor Salvatore Di Vittorio saw a niche for a professional orchestra for young players, offering regular performance opportunities to some of the many graduates who pour out of the country's conservatories each year.

The rather unimaginatively titled Chamber Orchestra of New York, founded in 2006, made its debut at Zankel Hall last year. It bills itself as the first professional orchestra in the city that performs in all five boroughs and employs only young musicians. (There are other local orchestras, however, like the Knights, that are also made up of young professionals.)

On Saturday evening at the Church of St. Jean Baptiste, at Lexington Avenue and 76th Street, Mr. Di Vittorio led his ensemble in the final concert of its inaugural season in a program called "Souvenir From Florence," which highlighted the string section.

The Chamber Orchestra was established in honor of Respighi, the traditionalist Italian composer who died in 1936. The program included his melancholy "Ancient Airs and Dances Suite No. 3," orchestral transcriptions of 16th- and 17th-century compositions for lute.

The musicians played with vigor and commitment throughout the evening, producing a polished, rich sound. Textural clarity, however, was often tarnished by the reverberant acoustics of the church, with the boomerang-like echo imbuing [Mozart's](#) Serenade No. 13, "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik," with a rather glutinous sheen.

That work was programmed as a nod to the ensemble's founding in the 250th anniversary of Mozart's birth.

The Adagietto from Mahler's Symphony No. 5 fared better under the acoustical circumstances and received a stirring performance.

In honor of the 50th anniversary of the death of Ralph Vaughan Williams, the orchestra played his richly melodic "Five Variants of 'Dives and Lazarus.'" Based on folk songs, it was written in 1939 as a commission from the World's Fair in New York.

The orchestra concluded the evening with a voluptuous rendition of [Tchaikovsky's](#) popular "Souvenir de Florence."