

CSO gives artful performance

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The Charleston Symphony Orchestra Masterworks concert Saturday at the Gaillard Auditorium was a program that many great small cities dream about.

With local patronage, superb and inspired musical direction, the audience was treated in the first half to Charles Ives' "Unanswered Question" and Richard Strauss' nine-movement work, "Le Bourgeois Gentlehomme."

Conductor David Stahl reminded us that the common denominator between Ives and Strauss was that they were both composers of independent means. In musical terms, that can translate into great art, and the audience was reminded of that as we listened to an exceptional performance by the CSO.

While the Ives' was ethereal and contemplative, Strauss' "Le Bourgeois Gentlehomme" was baroque, with the exception of featuring twentieth century instruments as soloists within the orchestra. Not many orchestras, the size and budget of Charleston's, could pull off the artistry.

Over one-third of the orchestra members were featured as a soloist, in this stunning work, and the acoustical challenges of the Gaillard Auditorium functioned well as a space for grand chamber music.

The second half concluded with Mozart's Jupiter Symphony, a chestnut of the classical repertoire. It would be hard to find a recording that would have been as satisfying to hear as having been able to enjoy the performance live, in performance.