



Aleksey Semenenko, *violinist*

The Millbrook Independent

Julia Bullock at the YCA Gala

Stephen Kaye | *The Millbrook Independent* | May 11, 2016

Knoxville: summer of 1915 by William Agee

...who shall ever tell the sorrow of being on this earth, lying, on quilts, on the grass, in a summer evening, among the sounds of night. May god bless my people, my uncle, my aunt, my mother, my good father, oh, remember them kindly in their time of trouble; and in the hour of their taking away. After a little I am taken in and put to bed. Sleep, soft smiling, draws me unto her: and those receive me, who quietly treat me, as one familiar and well-beloved in that home: but will not, oh, will not, not now, not ever; but will not ever tell me who I am.

Expressing that sorrow of being on this earth, as in a poem by William Agee, written in 1938 about a summer evening in Knoxville in 1915 to music by Samuel Barber written in 1948 was what Julia Bullock did on the evening of May 10, 2016. Her song was filled with nostalgia of a time and place long ago kept alive and made memorable in prose, in song and in a performance so memorable it too will become part of that legend. Agee's prose and Barber's music are both related to the death of their fathers. For Agee, that became the subject of his life's finest work, *A Death in the Family*. The prose poem whose last few lines are above was made part of that work.



Julia Bullock sang at [the Young Concert Artist Gala at Alice Tully Hall](#) Tuesday night in a performance that transcended all that went before and foretold a level of singing at a new, finer, deeper and richer level. I was taken by the smoothness and control of her voice and her emotive ability. She reaches more than our ears; she reaches our own emotive sensibility. Dawn Upshaw, one of Julia's teachers at the Bard Music Conservatory, recorded this same work with David Zinman and the Baltimore Symphony. Julia has acquired a similar ability to reach her audience with not just sound but with that extra something that has to do with communication of feelings.

Julia Bullock followed [Aleksey Semenenko playing solo violin in Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 5 in A Major with the Orchestra of St. Luke's brilliantly conducted by Michael Stern. His playing was crystal clear, with lovely tone, a treat in every way.](#) He could have been more dramatic, but that will come. His career is well-launched.

The final work of the evening was Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Major with Yun-Chin Zhou as the piano soloist. This wonderful piece of showcase music is a gem for both orchestra and pianist, and both played it to maximum speed and excitement. Zhou's playing was astonishing. His tall, spare frame belied the energy and brilliance he gave this music. When he let loose the sparks did fly – Stern and the orchestra responded and together they made joyous sounds most fitting for a gala. Zhou is well on his way. He is exciting, exacting and plays well to an audience.

Ms. Bullock's future engagements include appearances with Peter Sellars in the Ojai Music Festival in June, the LA Philharmonic under Gustavo Dudamel in July, Mostly Mozart in August and and Roulette in Brooklyn in September.