

From the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

By TOM STRINI

Journal Sentinel music critic

Posted: Jan. 28, 2007

Flanked by the bright rationality of Haydn and Mozart, Daron Hagen's dreamy and ecstatic "Seven Last Words of Christ" didn't seem to make a whole lot of sense at Sunday's Waukesha Symphony concert. Note that "Seven Last Words" is not a choral piece. It is a piano concerto for left hand alone, in seven connected movements spanning about 30 minutes.

A funny thing happened at the end, as the music evaporated into a mist of ethereal strings. I couldn't say why, as the architecture of the piece never became clear to me, but "Seven Last Words" suddenly came to feel dramatically and emotionally satisfying. Surely, that had something to do with **the fiercely committed, commanding performance of soloist Joel Fan**, conductor Alexander Platt and the members of the Waukesha Symphony Orchestra, who brought Hagen's gestures and colors to full shape and hue.

The mad religious ecstasy of "Seven Last Words" contrasted sharply with the earthy, sensible joys of Haydn's Symphony No. 104 ("London") and the transcendent idealism of Mozart's Symphony No. 41 ("Jupiter").

This program took place at the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center, in Brookfield, Wisconsin.