

REVIEW

Symphony's 'Razor Edge' performance compelling

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Some orchestral performances can be appreciated simply because every note and nuance is clearly heard. There's a certain drama to knowing that every musical part counts, and every player is personally responsible for the quality of the listener's experience.

The Lancaster Symphony Orchestra's concert at the Fulton Opera House Saturday afternoon was this type of experience.

Featured were three guest artists from the Trio Nacar, and music of the "tanguero." Each soloist first performed a concerto with the orchestra, and then after intermission we listened to Marcelo Nisinman's very attractive adaptations of the tango.

First was J.S. Bach's Concerto in F Minor, No. 5, BWV 1056, with Federico Aldao as piano soloist. This was the orchestra's weakest showing. The first movement was filled with action and movement, the soloist providing extended figuration, but sluggish imitations and tempo-setting from the orchestra broke the musical flow.

The slow second movement gave us the impression that our soloist is perhaps most comfortable in an idiom of greater musical freedom, affording a wide palette of volume and articulation choices. The second movement's beautiful single-line cantilena did not draw us into that highly personal and refined world that one associates with this passage.

It was in the fast concluding movement that Aldao's energy and creativity came to the foreground. The infectious rhythmic vitality and exquisite filigree work was executed with accuracy, and the effect was robust and satisfying.

Marcelo Nisinman was featured next in his own composition, "Rapsodia Portena" for bandoneon and orchestra. The bandoneon is a new instrument for some listeners, a relative of the accordion which has



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Pianist Federico Aldao follows Laslo Fenyo's cello bowing during the performance of Trio Nacar.

achieved great popularity in South America. This performance, which is an international premier, clearly demonstrated that Nisinman is a virtuoso player.

Modern, dissonant and intense, the work focuses largely on the orchestra, which adds an entire world of instrumental colors and special effects to the bandoneon's breathy sound. Tremolos, pizzicatos, glissandi, strident woodwind clusters, interjections of solo percussion, and liberal use of silence all added up to a poetic effect.

The composer stated that he drew on the tremendous cultural diversity of Buenos Aires to create his piece, and we indeed heard a unique mixture of tango, classicism, urban violence, and even a suggestion of East European folk music. Maestro Gunzenhauser shaped the entire work into a logical emotional plan, and the orchestra gave it a serious and imaginative reading.

Cello soloist Laszlo Fenyo performed Tchaikovsky's Variations on a Rococo Theme, Op. 33. Tchaikovsky's love for the music of Mozart was heard in the pervading elegance, sophistication and poise, but the effect of a full-blown romantic concerto was also present in the impressive virtuosity

from soloist and orchestra.

Fenyo gave an admirable performance, playing with sensitivity to nuances of volume and sonority, and with a charming delicacy. His technique is nearly flawless, to which is added a singing tone that brings the melodies to life. The cadenzas were showcases for rapid passages, trills, poised pizzicati, double-stopping and spirited passion.

The orchestra began the work confidently, and played with maturity and understanding. The dialog was sensitively delineated by Maestro Gunzenhauser, and the woodwind color in the refrain was perfect.

The remainder of the concert was devoted to the tango, a relatively new source of repertoire for orchestras, and its intensity kept us on "a razor edge." The collaboration of Trio Nacar is closely associated with the tradition of Astor Piazzolla, who blended tango with art, music and jazz. The tangos began with Marcelo Nisinman's adaptation for tango trio and string orchestra of Piazzolla's "Concierto de Nacar."

The first movement alternated between the effect of sensuous seduction and striking violence. It's dramatic, but at the same time a

great deal of fun. During the second, slow movement, the plaintive sound added to the anacholy, and feelings both personal and emotional were constantly examined. The last movement clearly demonstrated the beautiful counterpoint that two or three instruments can make, and executed with power and wit.

The Trio Nacar then moved to Astor Piazzolla's "Adios Nonno," the composer's tribute to the music of his late father. We heard it first played on the bandoneon. Piazzolla conceived it, and the trio and orchestra in one of Nisinman's adroit adaptations. Pianist Federico Aldao generated a wonderful atmosphere of musical depth during his opening cadenza, and the performance was stunning. The audience expressed so much appreciation that Trio Nacar treated us to an encore sounding like a tango fugue.

The haunting rhythm of tango was everywhere; perhaps we could have danced to it, but we were content instead to just listen. The combination of familiar and new music, extensive performance talent, and emotional intensity made for a compelling performance. The concert repeats this evening at 7:30.

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