

LSO Closes Season Masterfully

As with many things in life, how one begins is a good indicator of the quality of what will follow. On Tuesday the LaGrange Symphony Orchestra began its final concert of the subscription series with a wonderful rendition of the *Overture to The Magic Flute*, by Mozart. The piece opens with somber, somewhat mysterious sound chords. What follows quickly thereafter is the delightful melodies with which many classical music fans are familiar. Despite the potential for familiarity, the LSO rendered the piece with a freshness and excellence made possible by great phrasing and balance. The flute and bassoon sections were notably stellar. To convey the piece more authentically, Maestro Cobos utilized a smaller complement of players – fewer strings and brass – structured similar to the orchestras of Mozart's era. The *Magic Flute* (and its overture) have been consistent favorites with concertgoers, since the time Mozart first presented it. The LSO's fine performance and interpretation reminded us why that is so.

Following the Mozart, the orchestra performed the Bruch *Violin Concerto* in D-minor, featuring Callie Hammond. Ms Hammond is a home grown talent of great capability and potential. Her artistry showed in the mastery of the many complicated solo and *credenza* sections of this piece. Bruch wrote the concerto during the period commonly known as the "Romantic", when he was a contemporary of Johannes Brahms. (The most famous composer of this musical style was Beethoven.) Ms. Hammond and the LSO played with great passion and devotion, which easily came through to the audience. A couple of the sections lacked a degree of clarity, but this was probably due more to the violin having to play in the lowest portion of its range, than to the technical competence of the soloist. Overall it was a fine performance. The soloist and orchestra were deservedly awarded with extensive, effusive standing ovation from the audience, and Ms. Hammond received several bouquets of flowers.

The final piece of the evening was the Brahms *Second Symphony in G-major*: another well known piece of the Romantic period of classical music. One of the secrets to keeping Brahms exciting and interesting for a modern audience is knowing how to appropriately "pace" and phrase the work. Maestro Cobos is a master of this and his ability to communicate his interpretation to the players was well displayed. And so the LSO attacked the piece with a confidence that springs from an understanding of the "soul" of the music. They closed the concert magnificently, and the audience responded with thunderous applause and calls for an encore – which unfortunately we could not get.

As with everything in life, how well we complete a task often dictates how others will remember us. By this standard, the LSO and Patricio Cobos have

closed this year's concert season in a masterful way. The audience will not only think well of them, but eagerly look forward to the next season and the delightful music they will bring us then. Bravo!

Doug Hooker
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