

SYMPHONY REVIEW

Marin Symphony / Sunday, January 18, 2009

Alasdair Neale



THE DANCE CONTINUES IN MARIN

by Donna Kline

Sunday, January 18, 2009

The Marin Symphony, in keeping with the season's theme of the dance, performed two big Bartok and Prokofiev Suites Jan. 18 at the Marin Center, masterfully conducted by Alasdair Neale.

The initial audience interest rested with these provocative works, but the concert's spotlight finally rested on David Requiro, cello soloist in Tchaikovsky's "Variations on a Rococo Theme", Op. 33. Despite being a youthful 23, Requiro is clearly a mature performer. An Oakland native and Naumberg Competition winner, Requiro gave an effortless performance, drawing in listeners with precise intonation, suave phrasing, technical mastery and a tone that carried to the reaches of the large hall, albeit with amplification for the soloist. There was rapt audience attention and impeccable balance in the orchestral accompaniment.

The extraordinary and convincing Requiro performance framed the Bartok Suite from the "Miraculous Mandarin", an edgy, brash and dissonant work that Bartok composed in 1918. Calling the piece a "grotesque pantomime", the great Hungarian chose to depict a tale of urban depravity meeting with supernatural lust. Usually performed as a Suite rather than a full ballet, Neale preceded the performance with pragmatic explanatory comments. The instrumental execution was excellent with the woodwind and brass sections playing elegantly.

Prokofiev's Suite No. 1, Op. 64a, from "Romeo and Juliet," is one of the Russian's most famous compositions, and Neale selected mostly music from the second act of the Ballet. Seven different dances, written in 1935-1936, were performed with the charming addition of two excellent dancers from San Francisco's Smuin Ballet Troupe. Erin Yarborough-Stewart and Aaron Thayer reflected in their athletic grace the shimmering orchestra, with Neale attentive throughout. The last dance, "Death of Tybalt", was powerfully presented and generated a climatic ending.

The Marin Symphony is continuing to play music in an energetically "moving" dance season, tackling difficult works and succeeding brilliantly.

Comments (0) [View Comments »](#)

Share your thoughts - Add Your Comment

Registration not necessary!