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## **Last Night: Miami Symphony Orchestra at The Lincoln Theatre**

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**Miami Symphony**  
**April 27, 2008**  
**The Lincoln Theatre**

**Better Than:** 100 years of symphonic solitude sung by Marquez himself.

It's not every night that one gets to hear a hundred year span of classical music played live; then again, it's not every night that The Miami Symphony Orchestra hits one of our town's fabled stages – though I for one of what have gotta be many, more than kinda wish that it were.

Every night like last night, that is, when MSO hit Lincoln Theatre for its season closer, a closer which may even have been more robust than the season which preceded it.

Okay, so I hyperbolize. With a run that began with Piazzola's "Four Seasons" at The Knight, stepped through Gershwin at Gusman UM, and returned to the Arsht for Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 5*, it'd be impossible for a single evening to be more robust than the whole. Nevertheless, last night's tripling of Wagner, Beethoven and Sibelius came close. In fact, it just about knocked me out.

If you know Wagner, you know his opera *Meistersingers of Nuremberg*, perhaps the only smirk in the master's dour oeuvre. What you may not know is that the Prelude dates back

to 1861, and was staged a full five years before the opera itself was completed. Which makes it not only an oddity among Bavarian sturm und drang – it makes it an almost age-old classic.

And few better men know how to handle such classicism than MSO's maestro Eduardo Marturet. The dramatic sweeps, the subtle sighs, the kinetic get-up and be gone, all led mightily along by his nimble baton. This might be about as light as Wagner gets, but in the maestro's hands, its heavenly heaviness takes real flight.

Of course, given the chance, Marturet could pilot an airborne locomotive, but this is one maestro who's not afraid to defer to an ace, even while his hands remain firmly on the wheel. And when the stage was half struck and fitted for Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No. 4*, he happily had his podium hidden behind a Steinway grand so the rightfully acclaimed Susan Starr could come out and tickle the ivories.

Actually, tickling doesn't even begin to describe what this dame did to the keyboard in support of one of the big B's best-known works, unless by tickling you mean teasing out the ghost of the genius himself. I'm talking marvel, dig? The kinda marvel only a lifelong devotee could produce. Little wonder Starr's soloed for the likes of Bernstein, Fielder, Ormandy and Shostakovich, and made her debut with the Philadelphia Orchestra at the prodigious age of six. This chick knows how to kick the keys!

Then came Sibelius's *Symphony No. 2*, the so-called "Symphony of Independence," which when it was written in 1902 for many marked the struggle of Finland, then under Russia's oppressive thumb. It is the Fin's most popular work, despite – or because of – it not being as Slavic as its predecessor. Yet it is nonetheless severe, befitting both the time of its composition as well as the temperament of its composer, who was a kinda lapsed Romantic Nationalist with a penchant for the great outdoors.

And a doubly fitting work with which to end MSO's '07/'08 run for the roses. This being Sibelius, it's highly dramatic, but this being Sibelius in a brighter mood, it's also at times melodramatic. No, not like a soap opera, mind you, but like some predecessor to a soundtrack from a flick by Sirk, at once pastoral and heartbreaking. It is also distinctly liberating, as may or may not have been intended. And rather than the customary churn of the nearby Berents Sea, here Sibelius seems to invoke the gentler laps of the more distant Mediterranean, where fable and mystery swoon with the tides.

Till one hits the rip-roaring finale, that is, which MSO rendered with as much grandiosity as the master surely must've intended. An swell of strings, a rumble of brass, a boom of a well-played drum, each building in and on itself, circling, swerving until eventually they collided in a blaze of utter auditory glory. Sounded like a symphony to me – the Miami Symphony.

**Personal Bias:** I interviewed Marturet just before MSO's season opener – he was the consummate gentleman then; he remains the consummate gentleman now.

**Random Detail:** Lest you think MSO's all about blue hairs and biddies – the crowd ran the gamut from 16 to 70, as did the age of the Orchestra, though both skewed decidedly younger than the median.

**By the Way:** MSO's next season doesn't begin till October, but that doesn't mean they can't use your support right now. Log on to <http://miamisymphony.org> to find out how you can get involved.

- John Hood

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