



Miami Symphony mixes it up, from Vienna to Venezuela

By Lawrence Budmen

Mar 21, 2010



Pianist Tian Lu performed Beethoven with the Miami Symphony Orchestra Saturday night at Gusman Concert Hall.

The Miami Symphony Orchestra offered an attractive program of Beethoven and Schubert plus an engaging neo-Baroque novelty Saturday night at the University of Miami's Gusman Concert Hall.

Schubert's Symphony No. 5 is a romanticist's backward glance at the classical era of Haydn and Mozart. Eduardo Marturet led a highly polished performance of this melodic score with the orchestra in top form. Maintaining fine balance between strings and winds, Marturet sensitively gauged the opening movement's gentle lyricism and bursts of exuberance, with the songful Andante delicately etched. Marturet summoned animated power for the Menuetto—definitely

not a courtly dance in this version—and the final Allegro vivace sparkled with the verve of a Rossini opera buffa. Finely pointed wind playing, particularly from the principal flute, dominated this wonderful account of an early Schubert masterwork.

Tian Lu, a recent graduate of Ohio's Oberlin Conservatory, was the evening's soloist in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1. Lu's rendering of the first movement was nearly note-perfect but too restrained, lacking in thrust until the cadenza. Here she unleashed an explosive display of speed and dexterity. Similarly after a straitlaced start to the Largo, she played with considerable poetic sweep, closer to Chopin than Beethoven but beautifully shaped nonetheless. Her robust incisiveness in the Rondo concluded the performance in a virtuosic manner. Lu is clearly gifted and a promising artist with strong musical instincts and flawless technique, yet this young Chinese pianist remains a work in progress.

The concerto got off to a rocky start in the orchestra with some slips in the horns and less-than-precise ensemble. The clarinet solos in the second movement were assayed with suave tone, Marturet achieving excellent balance between soloist and orchestra.

The concert opened with the South Florida premiere of Fuga con Pajarillo (for string orchestra) by Venezuelan composer Aldemaro Romero (1928-2007). Founder of the Caracas Symphony Orchestra, Romero's work mixes a rigorous Bach fugue with a Latin beat. The Miami Symphony's excellent string section had a field day with this attractive, rollicking score, concertmaster Daniel Andai's solo showcasing his sterling musicianship. Kudos to Marturet for introducing this delightful cross-cultural work from his native Venezuela

As an encore, Marturet led a soaring version of Elgar's Salut d'amour. Drawing luminous string tone, Marturet led a beguiling account of this romantic vignette. Performed with such ardor and commitment, this salon piece became a freshly minted gem.

The Miami Symphony Orchestra repeats the program 8 p.m. Sunday at the Lincoln Theater in Miami Beach. <http://themiso.org>