

Lidia Nesci, November 16 2012

MUS 10 – 050

University Orchestra

On November 6th I attended the University Orchestra's concert. The orchestra consisted of violins, violas, cellos, contrabass, flutes, piccolo, oboe, clarinets, bassoon, horns, trumpets, trombone, timpani, and percussion. There were a lot of instrumentalists in my opinion, and they took up a good amount of space in the Georgian room. In that case, I would consider them to be a large orchestra. They played three pieces by Franz Joseph Haydn; including a March for the Royal Society of Musicians, Concerto in C Major, and also Symphony No. 104, "London." After intermission they finished with Carmen Suite by Bizet-Shchedrin. I had high expectations for the orchestra because I used to be an instrumentalist myself. I envisioned bright, bold colors. I figured the dynamics would be precise. Overall, I imagined I would hear a great show.

For an opening statement, the first piece by Haydn was a march. Because it was a march, one could really hear the strong meter throughout the song. This was played in 4/4 and the key of the piece was in major. I heard strong melodies along with loud and soft dynamics. The melodies, however, sounded very flowing. At one point of the piece, the violins began to pluck the strings, which in musical terms, is called pizzicato. This idea of pizzicato defines the notes and separates them so they are easily heard individually. I could hear the individual sounds of most of the instruments. Flutes, trumpets, and violins really came through over the rest of the orchestra, partly because these instruments have a higher pitch.

The last piece of the concert was called Carmen Suite, by Bizet-Shchedrin. There were ten fairly short movements in the entire piece. This piece is different from the first in the concert because it includes movements whereas the first did not. In the first half of the concert the orchestra was set up for a classical concert. Once the intermission took hold, they switched into a traditional set up. So the first piece was a classical one, whereas the last piece was played in a traditional orchestra. The order for the movements in

the last piece are, the Prelude, Dance, First Intermezzo, Changing of the Guard, Carmen's Entrance/Habanera Scene, Second Intermezzo, Toreador and Carmen, Adagio, and Finale.

The first movement began with the bells and chimes playing slowly and softly. At one point there were violins playing pizzicato. There was a strong, deep bass line. When the tambourine entered, the movement picked up speed and the tempo became allegro. In the second movement, the orchestra sounds noisy and busy as if something important or exciting in the piece occurred. Later in the movement, the music slows down and becomes more somber. There are strong drum hits that give the movement a more powerful feel. Toward the end of this movement, a marching snare plays and fades out. The third movement starts choppy and frantic. It is in the minor key, which explains how some chords do not sound pleasant together. It brings back the theme from the first movement. The dynamics are also very strong in this piece. The fourth movement is also in a minor key and the beginning sounds sneaky or secretive based on the music. This piece builds up later on when the violins are repeating a chromatic scale. However, in the fifth movement the music starts soft and songlike. It is very melodic but at the end it sounds like the instruments are imitating a screeching sound. The sixth movement begins with a snare roll followed by a bang. I heard a strong bass line, along with repetition with a snare in the background. The main theme returns, soft at first, then forte. This movement ends with a stinger, which is one last note for emphasis, usually in marches. The seventh movement gives off the impression that something bad is going to happen. The timpani hits loudly and powerfully. The conductor holds/ pauses the orchestra at certain spots and resumes with soft melodies. During the eighth movement the tempo was allegro and the themes got louder with each repetition. It kept switching between a major and minor key. The ending was with a contrabass solo. And for the last movement in this piece, the main theme returns one last time, again with the pizzicato. It ended slowly and peacefully.

Overall, my favorite piece during this concert was the second one, Concerto in C Major by Haydn. As I listened, I heard precise notes; they were very separated so the listener could hear each one individually. I did notice that not every bow was in sync however, the music was. When I observed the conductor, I found that he was conducting in a 3/4 meter, and also at some points he switched to a 2/4

meter. The key also changed between major and minor several times. At some point in the piece, the orchestra sounded frantic. That gave the impression that someone or something was in distress, or that something bad was happening. There were different dynamics going through the whole piece that also added to the piece sounding frantic. The dynamics changed between piano, mezzo forte, and forte. Dr. Marie-Aline Cadieux was the cello soloist during this piece. At the end of the piece she had her own cello solo along with a cadenza.

Generally speaking, the concert was fantastic. From a former instrumentalist's point of view, I was highly impressed. After this concert, it made me realize how much I missed my instrumentalist days. I know the hard work it takes to learn the music and play it right, including dynamics, tempo, and sharps or flats there might be in the key signature. The amount of effort the orchestra put into this concert shows. I had high expectations for the orchestra, and I was blown away after the concert. My favorite piece as stated previously, was the Concerto in C Major. My least favorite piece however, was the last one, Carmen's Suite. I appreciated the beautiful music and exotic sounds from the percussion section, but I did not enjoy the length of the piece and the many movements. Other than that, I think this was a great concert and I look forward to more.