

Live Concert Review

Kwesi Kwarko-Fosu

Introduction

I saw the University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra perform at the MacMillan Theatre. The conductor for this group was named David Briskin. No guest artist/conductor appeared to perform with the U of T Symphony Orchestra. It was performed, as I said before, at the Macmillan Theatre, which is located in the Edward Johnson Building. The address is 80 Queens Park Ave. The venue was efficient and large, as the sound would echo across the room. The seats were quite comfortable and well designed. The seating capacity was 815 in the Theatre. There were approximately 500 people who attended. The floor was on a slope in rows, and it had 2 tiers.

Short Description of Performing Group

There were no modified instruments for this performance. This band would be considered an amateur band, as they are students and do not get paid for their performance, but they played like a professional band. The men wore tuxedos, while the women wore black dresses of any version, with the exception of the two piano players who wore flower dresses, which looked quite well on them.

The Concert as a Whole

The concert was overall quite entertaining. At times, however, I was not as enthusiastic as I was before, as the songs dragged on, so at parts it wasn't as exciting as other parts. I feel that this concert was universal, as anyone who has a love for classical music could come and enjoy the pieces the orchestra played. Considering, however, that younger kids like more edgy and pop music, I think an older audience would gladly attend more than a younger audience. The concert was well paced, with an intermission so the audience could discuss and have a chat with their mates.

Comment on Performance

This performance was one for the ages, as it was a job well done by the orchestra. They began the performance with a prelude. This song used dynamics strongly, as the orchestra played extremely soft, as if the band wasn't playing. The French horn had a mini solo which was played well. The next part had the violins playing the fast part of the song. The violins, in my opinion, played a little bit too loud, but the oboe overcame that as it had many melodies which were played strong. The third section introduced the harp, which played an elegant melody. The crescendos and decrescendos were nice, and there was an interesting part where the flutes play, and the violins playback. The last section also had varied in tempos, and the trumpet

played the melody with confidence. The second piece (Tabuh-Tabuhan) brought in the 2 piano players, Megan Chang and Magumi Okamoto. These two players played their parts with much excitement, as they hit every key as it was their last. The wooden xylophone was introduced in this movement also. This second movement was much more colourful than the first, with the dramatic style used for this piece, but at times it had an eerie feeling as well. My favourite piece was the one after the intermission (Symphony No. 40 in G minor, K. 550), as for my grade 8 exam, I had to play various parts from it, and it was nice to hear the clarinet play the mini solos so fluently, and how the clarinet part fits in with the whole orchestra! There were different styles, as one song may be dramatic and slow, then the next will increase in tempo, then a very fast tempo to end off the movement. Overall, the performance was a job well done, and they played it exceptionally well. I would love to listen to them again.

Comment on Technical Aspects of Concert

I feel that Fred Perruzza (Director of Operations), Ian Albright (Technical Assistant), and Bob Dunkin (Production Assistant) deserve special acknowledgement for their efforts on keeping the technology together for the Orchestra's performance. The setting was effective acoustically, and the atmosphere was exceptional. The lighting did not have to change, and it was very visible to see all the instruments, and the audience lights were dimmed low enough to pay attention to the orchestra. It lightened up the mood for the concert.

Comment on the Audience & Response

Many elders attended this concert, and many university students showed, and all of Mr. Gray's fine young students attended! All types of cultural mixes attended, and wealthier classes attended. The audience was consistent with the interest for the first half, but for the second half, part of the audience began to feel drowsy and not as into it as they used to be. Even when the orchestra would play some heavy notes, the audience did not shake from the loud music made by the orchestra. They did respond consistently, however, clapping with tremendous applause after each symphony. The applause was polite, as they are people from a wealthier upper class level, and clapped with politeness. A few of the younger students, however, clapped spontaneously, or didn't clap at all. Nobody from Mr. Gray's class, however. During the intermission, everyone talked about how the solos were played, and how specific instruments hit some of the high notes played. After the performance, many teenagers spoke about the performance and how they wouldn't mind listening to it again.

To Sum Up

I enjoyed this concert, and I would love to hear them play again. It was nice, as I recognized one of the pieces they played (Symphony No. 40 in G minor, K. 550, by W.A Mozart), and I knew what part they were at, as I had to play bits of it for my grade 8 exam. It was an enjoyable experience, and I would recommend it to anyone! If you do not have anything to do one

evening, take a visit and listen to the University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra, you will be amazed, and it will be worth it!