

DPO concert highlights guest conductor, violinist

Burt Saidel



We have a great symphony orchestra. They live and play in an incredible symphony hall. It is obvious that it is the Dayton Philharmonic and the Schuster Center.

These kudos have been said many times but, like loving words for your spouse, they cannot be repeated too often. As proof, I repeat, we have a great symphony orchestra. They live and play in an incredible symphony hall.

The December concert, under the baton of guest conductor Kazem Abdullah, proved these points again. Maestro Neal

The music moved from Baroque Haydn through Romantic Brahms to Modernist Béla Bartók. Each work was given a reading by Maestro Abdullah and performance by the artists of the Philharmonic that earned its "bravos."

In spite of his exotic name, Kazem Abdullah is a Daytonian. From 1985 to 1996, he lived in Dayton attending Van Cleve Elementary, Stivers Middle School and Col. White High. What could be more Dayton than that?

He credits his early music exposure, education and support to teachers Joyce Mitchell and Claude Thomas. Their devotion led him to Interlochen National Music Center and on to the Cincinnati Conservatory.

At barely 30, this gifted young man is decades ahead of a young conductor's career path. He works

the São Paulo Orchestra of Brazil on tour and now heads for Paris and the Opera at the Châtelet. Charming and unassuming, he let his baton prove that his success is only beginning.

The concert opened with Haydn's "The Miracle Symphony." The spirit of the music was conveyed clearly with precision and verve. One of the highlights was the triumphant return of principal oboist Eileen Whalen from sick leave. Her solo in the andante 2nd movement signaled that she is hale and hearty.

While the Brahms' Violin Concerto ended the concert, I will describe it in the chronologic order of the music. The iconic greats, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Mendelssohn and Brahms, each wrote only one concerto for violin. (Yes, another youthful concerto of Mendelssohn has been discovered and is occasionally played.)

These works are monuments to music - rich, expressive and full of familiar joys. Young and handsome Frank Almond, concertmaster of the Milwaukee Symphony, became part of the orchestra as soloist. The solo violin seemed restrained, yet very musical.

Phrasing and orchestral conversation were excellent, but lacked some of the richness of this great work. The orchestra provided a resonant and beautiful support for the soloist.

The real climax of the evening came before intermission. Maestro Kazeem took the opulent music of Béla Bartók's *The*

Miraculous Mandarin Suite into the stratosphere of mellifluous sound and remarkable inventiveness.

Bartók creates a kaleidoscope of music. Each section, every artist, is called upon to play the black dots appearing on their music pages in relationship to the black dots of every other artist.

Themes appear and disappear. Single notes from a horn or bassoon start a display from every part of the orchestra. I must laud the woodwind section, the clarinets led by John Kurokawa, flutes by Rebecca Tryon, oboes by Eileen Whalen and French horns by Robert Johnson. They established so many of the patterns making the entrancing sounds which are Bartók.

For clarity and in summation, I repeat my former statement. We have a great symphony orchestra. They live and play in an incredible symphony hall.

Soirees Musicales

Each time we attend another of Don Hageman's Soirées Musicales, it is with a feeling of nostalgia. Impresario Don has announced that this season, the 40th, will be the finale for these wonderful piano recitals.

The nostalgia turned to angst when we heard the debut of Danish pianist Jens Elvekjaer. This remarkable young man captivated the devoted audience at Shiloh Church from his very first notes.

Tall, handsome and young, his knees just fit under the piano;

his command of every note was entrancing. He began the evening with a Haydn sonata in E-flat. Smiling and reacting to his own sounds, he played the music with a delicate clarity and easily discernible underlying power.

The next work, Variations for Piano by Anton Webern, gave the spare, even sparse composition of this master of 12 tone music, a life and emotion rarely felt. In Webern, the short works require each note to resonate with a special purpose. Elvekjaer provided the startling sounds with unique warmth and meaning.

The recital continued with selections from Ravel's *Miroirs*. These reveries, so different from the Webern, were full of joyous amiability and musicality.

The printed program ended with Robert Schumann's *Carnaval*. It is a giant work of some 21 different musical vignettes. Like Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, which would follow years later, these were the composer's personality sketches of his friends.

Often, the selections seem disjointed. Under Elvekjaer's fingers, they morphed into one another with musical grace. The encore, a Schubert Impromptu, was simply exquisite expressing the essence of Schubert's genius.

I thought the audience would begin shouting to Impresario Don, "Give us another season to bring this genius back to Dayton." The audience was too polite and restrained, but the meaning was clear!



JOHN E. PIATT
Loan Account Executive



Office: (937) 434-1254 x 172
EMAIL: jpiatt@usavingsbank.com
FAX: (937) 291-2596
Toll Free: (800) 767-7396
Cell: (937) 609-5669

5651 Far Hills Avenue • Dayton, Ohio 45429-2205



CONVENTIONAL • FHA • VA • HOME LOANS • CONSTRUCTION
LOT LOANS • REFINANCES APT/INVESTMENT • COMMERCIAL • BLANKET LOANS



-YOU'RE INVITED-
"BACH'S LUNCH"
DPO'S CARILLON BRASS
HOLIDAY MUSIC
THIS FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11TH
10:00 AM & 12 NOON
LOFT THEATRE, DOWNTOWN

FREE

THANK YOU
Betsy & Lee Whitney

DAYTONPHILHARMONIC.COM
OR 224-3521 FOR MORE INFO
COFFEE & DOUGHNUTS IN AM
BOX LUNCHES FOR SALE AT 12



Happy Holidays
from



**Antique Consignment
Shop & Gallery**

Unique, Artful &
One-of-a-Kind Gifts

10% Off Storewide
with this ad

Hours: 10-5 Mon. - Sat.
12-5 Sun. thru Christmas

(937)-226-1196

Expert Furniture Restoration, Repair & Refinishing