

MSO ends season with magical evening

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Saturday evening the Mason Symphony Orchestra presented his axils subscription concert of its 20th year. For this season-ending concert, renowned cellist Zviil Bailey returned to the stage at the Grand Opera House, playing Arminin Denzlik's "Cello Concerto in B minor, Opus 104."

The soloist's superb technique and control brought added dimension to this already heroic work. His approach was that of the 19th century romanticist, master, allowing the tempo to subtly accelerate or retard (speed up or slow down) as is suggested by the mood of the music. A

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prime example was his handling of the calm inner portion of the first movement.

Structurally, this concerto is called the development section because it is traditionally the point at which the themes that have already been introduced are now manipulated or developed. During this development section, Bailey gradually built momentum through incremental increases in tempo and volume. This gradually prepared the listeners for the climactic and impeccably secured octave passage that was the interface between the development section and the recapitulation (or restatement) of themes

in their nearly original guise). Yet despite its virtuosity and its rhythmic freedom, he made the movement dance in the Czech manner. A poignant duel between the solo cello and a single flute provided another magical moment in this first movement.

This second movement, an adagio (slow tempo), highlighted the flexibility of the MSO's wind section. Poetic and lyrical elements came into play and Bailey displayed his incredible versatility in producing a wide palette of tonal shading. From the barest whisper of a purely white sound to the angst of a nearly viscous attack, and from rich gushing warmth to the penetrating focus of leaning on the bridge of the instrument, Bailey ex-

plained the full potential of the cello. Not to be outdone by a single cello, Maestro Adrian Green brought the full focus of the orchestra into play at the intermission. This half of the concert consisted of Richard Strauss' late tone poem, "Ein Heldenleben" which translates as "A Hero's Life." This was juxtaposed with two Vivaldi first appearances to the score.

The trumpet, horn, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and flute were excellent. The strings were, in general, first-rate with a few very minor blemishes. Off stage trumpets were perfectly executed and synchronized with the orchestra on stage. The sheer wall of sound coming from the stage was exquisite; it's texture lush, rich and perfectly balanced. A signifiant portion of this work

is a dialogue between the cello and as represented by the orchestra, and his wife/companion, as represented by a solo violin. Conductor David Johnson gave a tearful flawless performance as the solo violinist, imitating his playing with fiery virtuosity as suggested by the musical dialogue.

Saturday's concert was a terrific season ender. The caliber of the orchestra has improved tremendously during its years under the baton of conductor and artistic director Giam Mason is fortunate indeed to have such a resource as he has brought to our concert hall and it is hoped that we can look forward to many more years of Mason's continued direction.