

# ZUILL BAILEY

## CELLO

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### WACO TRIBUNE-HERALD

#### Famed cellist, soaring music and winning cocker enliven Waco concert

By Carl Hoover Friday, October 27, 2006

Anyone with doubts about the future of classical music didn't see Zuill Bailey play Thursday night with the Waco Symphony Orchestra.

The handsome young cellist pulled a Waco Hall audience into the jagged rhythms and grazing dissonances of Shostakovich's Cello Concerto No. 1 through the sheer force of his passion for the music.

And if the caliber of his musicianship wasn't enough, the 34-year-old Bailey visited with patrons before and after his concert to explain the piece and chat about his work.

His performance highlighted the inaugural concert of the WSO's 45th anniversary season, though close behind it was the orchestra's glowing, rousing rendition of Dvorak's Symphony No. 9 ("From the New World"), a marvelous example of ensemble playing in spite of occasional overbearing stridence from the brass section.

The black-clad, dark-haired Bailey tackled the concerto's challenges with relish: the first movement's sharp, insistent rhythms, restless motion and high range; the second's mournful, singing lines dotted with lighter musical phrases, like happy memories recalled in sadness; a cadenza accented by eerie, sliding pitches; and a finale of insistent urgency, with furious bowing and plucking.

The orchestra, led by Music Director Stephen Heyde, ably complemented Bailey, but it was the cello front and center in this work.

The WSO's time to shine came in the concert's second half, with the Dvorak symphony. A fine sense of dynamics, stirring sectional play from the strings and sweet tone from the woodwinds plus forceful brass accents made it a symphony to remember.

Particularly memorable was the symphony's second movement, with an achingly rich and soulful solo by English hornist Aryn Mitchell matched by delicate work from the strings at movement's close. While applause between movements generally is frowned upon in concert etiquette, an exception could have been made here.

The performance's one flaw lay in trombones and trumpets that occasionally blared over softer, melodic play from strings and woodwinds.

The WSO launched the new season with California composer Carolyn Bremer's "Early Light," a lively prelude inspired by her love for baseball.

The season opener featured two program additions meant to honor orchestra players and introduce individual musicians to the audience. Seven players were honored for more than 10 years' service with the WSO while, in a new "Spotlight" feature, English hornist Mitchell introduced the Dvorak symphony — known for that lovely English horn solo — with a brief talk on why the work reminds her of her father.

State 19th District Court Judge Ralph Strother, president of the Waco Symphony Board, welcomed the Waco Hall audience in remarks preceding the concert, accompanied onstage by his cocker spaniel Buffy, the subject of a controversy earlier this year between Strother and McLennan County Commissioner Lester Gibson.

Strother introduced Buffy as an assistant to the conductor, quipping: "I wanted to hold out for a county commissioner (as an assistant), but they're so much more expensive."

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