

# ZUILL BAILEY

## Cellist

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### Review

#### Music hits mark despite the dark

#### Orchestra: A brief problem with the lights didn't disrupt the flow of ASO guest conductor Robert Moody.

By Mary Johnson  
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Robert Moody, introduced as the last of the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra's guest conductors for the season, faced a rather daunting challenge after the intermission of a concert last weekend.

Shortly after starting the third movement - the adagio - of Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2 in E Minor, the lights went out in Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts, leaving the audience and musicians in darkness for seven minutes.

Maestro Moody more than coped. He joked with the audience about the lights being dimmed to enhance the piece's romantic mood. As the lights returned over the audience only, he suggested that it perform for the orchestra.

When a few overhead rear stage lights came on, providing only dim illumination, Moody and the orchestra resumed the third movement. The music went from sumptuous to rapturous as the stage lights fully returned.

In lesser hands, the evening might have been a disaster.

Earlier Moody demonstrated a keen sense for programming by offering works by another Russian romantic and a Mexican composer.

The program began with a contemporary 10-minute work filled with pleasant melodies and irresistible rhythms - Danzon No. 2 by Arturo Marquez, an ideal opening piece evoking couples dancing to Afro-Cuban rhythms on balmy Mexican nights. It was a perfect antidote to the frigid Annapolis evening.

This was followed by Tchaikovsky's Variations on a Rococo Theme - in which the Russian composer seems to be in a light mood as he pays homage to his favorite composer, Mozart, by moving in and out of the rococo era in theme variations that at times seem more reminiscent of the Austrian composer.

This intriguing work was performed by cellist Zuill Bailey, who demonstrated a virtuoso technique that extended to notes so high they seemed to range beyond the cello's constrictions, while also tapping the depths of his 300-year-old instrument. Throughout, Moody and the orchestra displayed a rapport with Bailey.

In response to two standing ovations, Bailey chose an encore piece generally associated with a full orchestra and rarely performed on cello. Yet in his soulful rendition of Jules Massenet's Meditation from Thais, he made the work seem designed for his instrument as he offered a tribute to his teacher, former Annapolis resident Stephen Kates, who died in 2003.

After intermission, Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2 in E Minor was presented with color and feeling.

The next concert in ASO's classics series is scheduled for May 6 and 7, when the new music director conducts the final concert of the season.

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