

Barrie Concert Review – Saturday April 7th at 7:30 p.m. - Nurhan Arman Conducts Sinfonia Toronto and Pianist Stewart Goodyear

Submitted by Sandra Ruttan, Musician and Music Teacher



Magnificent Music in the hands of Magnificent Musicians

This makes a truly magnificent experience

The Barrie Concert on Saturday April 7 featured Nurhan Arman conducting Sinfonia Toronto and pianist Stewart Goodyear in performance at Hiway Pentecostal Church. In his introductory talk, Bruce Owen of the Barrie Concert Association executive spoke eloquently of the “experience” that makes live music such a rewarding way to enjoy great music. His words rang vividly true for the performance that was about to unfold.

There was the ensemble of magnificent musicians. Maestro Nurhan Arman, conductor of Sinfonia Toronto, has conducted major orchestras all over the world and is highly influential in the international world of conducting and performance. The thirteen string players who make up Sinfonia Toronto, all virtuosic soloists in their own right, have recorded and concertized across Canada and abroad. Guest soloist, pianist Stewart Goodyear, has also performed with major orchestras the world over, following extensive training are the Royal Conservatory in Toronto, the Curtis Institute of Music, and The Juilliard School. Combine these musicians with the music of great composers, and it’s no wonder that a magnificent experience would ensue.

The concert began with Sinfonia Toronto performing a delightful fanfare by Canadian composer, Chan Ka Nin. Written in celebration of Canada’s 150th anniversary, this piece, full of rhythmic energy and evocative themes swept the listener along like a train travelling across a changing landscape. Next was the Simple Symphony, Op. 4, by Britten, a piece whose spirited movements were aptly labelled Boisterous, Playful, Sentimental and Frolicsome. The Serenade for Strings by Dvořák introduced a new level of intensity with a deeply satisfying Moderato, a sultry Menuetto, a fluid Allegro Con Moto, a deeply textured Scherzo Vivace, an immense Larghetto and an exciting Finale. The fluid gestures of Maestro seemed to conjure music out of the air; the players swayed slightly, like tall grass in a light breeze, their bows moving together; the vibration of the strings being bowed and plucked and strummed filled the room and resonated in each listener’s chest; the sound whispered and chuckled and poured out in turn, all of it in amazing synchronicity. This was a complete experience of sight, sensation and sound.

After the intermission, pianist Stewart Goodyear joined Sinfonia Toronto to perform Beethoven’s “Emperor Concerto”. From the opening flourish it was immediately apparent that listeners were in for a treat. Goodyear played with tremendous clarity, making textures and patterns in the music beautifully transparent. His touch was assertive and delicate in turn, his trills magical, his transitions seamless. It was a wonderful demonstration of masterful technique totally at the service of the music.

A well-deserved standing ovation brought the magnificent evening to a fitting close.