

Review: Venetians wow 'em at Troy Savings Bank Music Hall

Monday, November 7, 2011

TROY – Interpreti Veneziani knocked the socks off a small crowd Saturday night at the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall. The concert was part of a three-week North and South American tour and the second time the group has appeared at the hall.

There were nine members this trip out of a possible 20 players, who are all based in Venice. The standard of excellence is so consistent that it allows any member of the group to be a soloist. That's why each of the five violinists got a chance to solo, as did the cellist and violist. Only the bassist and the harpsichordist had to settle for being part of the ensemble.

And what an ensemble it is. The musicians play as one with perfect pitch and a unified conception of tone and dynamic levels. The result is a very refined, polished sound with a crystalline quality of tone. What was so cool was how furiously they attacked the fast tempos. It was exuberance galore.

They began with Vivaldi's "Four Seasons." Paolo Ciociola did Spring; Sebastiano Maria Vianello did Summer; Pietro Talamini did Autumn; and Giuliano Fontanella did Winter. Most of the soloists throughout the evening worked without music and stood in the center surrounded in a half-circle by the other players.

Seamless soloists

Tempos were vivacious and bouncy. Rhythms and all technical passages were clean and clear. Trills were very tight. Dynamics of many hues were used. There was a flow even when passages would slip from a delicate quiet to a ferocious, fiery loudness to a solo cadenza. There were no histrionics from the soloist. It was all done seamlessly.

Each soloist led with ease. Vianello especially had huge sections of super-fast streams of notes that led one to wonder if anyone could play those notes any faster. It all seemed like such fun.

Boccherini's "Fandango" was stylish, with cellist Nazzareno Balduin especially enjoying his solo glissandos and ! tapping the wood of his bow to simulate castanets.

Handel's Concerto Grosso, Op. 6, No. 10 was solid, spirited, well-paced and with such a tight ensemble that the music sounded fresh and vibrant.

Sarasate's Introduction and Allegro with violinist Nicola Granillo as the exuberantly flashy soloist was a nod to romance. Granillo showed a big, lush tone, lots of fire and ended with a big smile. The crowd stomped and roared its approval with a standing ovation, whistles and cheers.

It got two encores, both by Vivaldi: the third movement of a concerto for violin, viola, cello and strings that was catchy with more fast streams of notes played to perfection; and the first movement of a concerto for two violins that was equally pleasing. Copyright (c) 2011 The Daily Gazette Co. All Rights Reserved.