

REVIEW



a performance worth STANDING FOR

Philharmonic, its pianist earn high praises for weekend concert

IN planning programs for the Columbus Indiana Philharmonic, maestro David Bowden inevitably comes up with some of the most interesting combinations of orchestral works.

Saturday evening's concert at the Columbus North High School auditorium was no exception, featuring two towering masterpieces of orchestral literature and an early twentieth-century piece by one of America's most important composers of that era, George Whitefield Chadwick.

A copious composer of operas, orchestral music, choral and solo works with orchestra and chamber music including five string quartets, Chadwick received most of his musical tutelage in European musical centers such as Leipzig and Munich, as did many American composers of that era. However, his symphonic works contained undeniable American influences such as jazz, African-American folk songs and Scotch-Irish tunes.

As the opening work on last Saturday's concert, we were treated to the last of four of his pieces known as Symphonic Sketches, subtitled "A Vagrom Ballad." Webster tells us that vagrom is a corruptive name for vagrant, and true to its name, Chadwick entertains with shifting melodic ideas and jaunty rhythms that roam throughout the engaging piece.

The orchestra readily adapted to the playfulness and musical pranks that abounded. Chadwick gave important solo passages to the bass clarinetist, Keith Northover, who played with a warm, sultry

sound, making full use of the melodic possibilities of this eclectic instrument.

Next on a program that highlighted two of classical music's most memorable masterworks, Bowden turned to probably the single most often-played piano concerto, Edward Grieg's "Piano Concerto in A Minor." Having early on received brilliant accolades from such musical luminaries as Tchaikovsky, Liszt and Anton Rubenstein, Grieg's piano concerto has become an international staple of the literature for piano and orchestra.

Its successful execution demands a pianist of consummate technique and deeply emotional melodic inventiveness.

Timothy Stephenson, a brilliant young virtuoso and now a Philharmonic member, filled that bill with distinction. Having already won several major piano competitions he is currently a candidate for the doctor of music degree from Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music. He brought a singing tone from the piano but also included a searing, re-sounding style when the music needed power and brilliance.

The cadenza of the first movement calls for crashing chords and fast, exciting passage work, all of which Stephenson executed with aplomb.

If there is anything to criticize, it would be some stray, wrong notes in more than a few chords. However, the overall impression that this outstanding pianistic talent made makes me want to hear more from his storied house of keen musical ability.

After intermission, the spotlight turned to the Philharmonic itself, which gave us a penetrating account of Brahms' Second Symphony. Sometimes it takes a lifetime for a piece of music to enter the mainstream of classical music and other times its premiere establishes it as a sure favorite.

Brahms was fortunate to compose two symphonies that had immediate, enthusiastic responses from both critics and the general public. Replete with gorgeous melodies and alternating between moods tender and exuberant, Brahms maintains a "sunny disposition" throughout this gargantuan work.

The solo passages work of principal hornist Scott Holben, principal oboist Nancy Argersinger, and principal flutist Kathy Dell, and principal trumpet Eddie Ludema added distinction and high quality to an already outstanding orchestral presentation. Bowden maintained excellent tempos without feeling rushed at any time, and the sonority and technical prowess of the Philharmonic have never been more in evidence.

Under the inspired leadership of its conductor, the Philharmonic showed its distinction as a major symphony orchestra of the state of Indiana. A comfortable crowd gave the performers two standing ovations, which they well deserved.

I would continue to hope, however, that a concert of this A1 quality would attract a standing-room only audience.

Charles Webb is dean emeritus of Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University in Bloomington. Send comments to editorials@therepublic.com.

Picture: Pianist Timothy Stephenson reacts during a performance Saturday with the Columbus Indiana Philharmonic. **Submitted by** Chris Cowan.

DESIGN

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Others selected for the new committee are: Jeff Bergman, city-county planning director; Britt Brewer, community outreach coordinator for the J. Irwin Miller Architecture Program; Jim Bickel, Columbus Regional Health CEO; Mark Jones, Columbus Parks and Recreation director; Karen Niverson, Columbus Visitor's Center director; Jim Roberts, Bartholomew Consolidated School Corp. superintendent and Frank Miller, Columbus city councilman.

"We are now at the point where we have to determine how we are going to pursue activities to complete our vision of what this facility can become," Columbus Mayor Jim Liehoo said at a board meeting Monday.

Multiple uses will be considered in addition to sports and recreation that will include parks administration, appropriate retail like Dunham's Sports, and possibly some services provided by Columbus Regional Hospital, Liehoo said.

The city completed the purchase of the 35-acre mall property for \$5.9 million in December.

The main task of the committee will be to seek requests for proposals regarding a design for the project, board members said. Also, part of this group's responsibilities will be to provide opportunities for public input and comment, said Mary Ferdon, Columbus executive director of administration and community development.

In addition to setting up the committee, board members learned the mall is projecting a positive fund balance for the year. Ferdon said the mall is projected to have positive cash flow of \$98,383 this year. That figure was included in an update provided Monday by finance committee chairman Brad Davis.

New procedures to lease space at the mall were also approved by the board.

If a tenant wishes to lease space for 12 months or less, terms of the lease must first be reviewed by the chairmen of the board's facilities and finance committees. If both chairmen approve a renewal or new lease lasting less than a year, the board will give the authority to sign the lease agreement to mall manager Veritas Realty of Indianapolis.

But a different approach will be undertaken for new tenants

About the project

The city announced in late August that it planned to purchase the 35-acre mall property at 25th Street and Central Avenue from New FairOaks Mall Owner LLC for \$5.9 million through a partnership with Columbus Regional Hospital and a grant from the Heritage Fund — The Community Foundation of Bartholomew County.

The city plans to turn the mall into a community recreational and sports tourism complex, with the Columbus Parks and Recreation Department a likely tenant.

The city will pay \$4,087,500, or 75 percent of the property's \$5.45 million appraised value, while the hospital will pay \$1,362,500, which represents 25 percent of the appraised value. The Heritage Fund has also committed to providing \$450,000, which reflects the difference between the agreed-upon selling price and the appraised value, according to the city.

wishing a lease greater than 12 months. Under those circumstances, the tenant would receive a combined review by the chairmen of three board committees: finance, facilities and planning.

If that tenant is approved, one of the chairmen will have the authority to act as a signatory for the longer-term lease.

Meanwhile, answers are being sought for a lingering question among those who have used Fair Oaks Mall for special events in the past, Davis said.

"We're going to work in concert with the city to make sure we are not competing with other rental spaces within the community, as well as make sure we at least covering our costs," Davis said.

The committee is currently looking into matters such as insurance guidelines for those renting or leasing space, as well as establishing what type of amenities are going to be offered, he said.

In December, board members said the remaining mall tenants will notice few changes for the next year. For at least the next three years, retail businesses operating in the mall — which opened in 1990 — will have an opportunity to be part of the transformation, Liehoo said. All existing tenant leases will be honored, the mayor said.

COUNCIL

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residential property at 4300 Goeller Blvd. Another 8.8 acres of property at 4441 W. County Road 25 South will be annexed if the council approves a final reading of the request later this month.

Traditions of Columbus would include a combination of 126 studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom assisted living residences designated for assisted living, independent living and memory care.

When a 288-unit apartment complex was proposed for the same space in 2016, Columbus resident George Gratz, 1225 Black Hawk Drive, strongly opposed the project, citing increased traffic and safety concerns. At Tuesday's city council meeting,



The Leo Brown Group, based in Indianapolis, is proposing to build an assisted living facility called Traditions of Columbus on 17 acres at 4300 Goeller Blvd. and 4441 W. County Road 25.

however, Gratz told the council he was in favor of the assisted living facility.

"After having been disenchanted with the apartment complex, I

happened to be involved with a couple exploratory things in terms of potential development in this area," Gratz said. "Having seen that over a three-year period, I

think we would be really naive to think that there's not going to be development along this corridor at some point in the future," Gratz said he thinks

this plan is as good as it gets when looking at traffic numbers, given the residential population for an assisted living facility is lower than previous proposals for apartments.

The Columbus Plan Commission offered a favorable recommendation for the project in January, but requested that emergency access be developed on County Road 25 South, additional sidewalks added to Goeller and use of the property be limited to retirement and assisted living facilities only.

Council members also recommended adding a buffer between single-family residences surrounding the property and the site.

An amended request to include the buffer will be considered on final reading at 6 p.m. Feb. 19 at Columbus City Hall council chambers.

EXPERIENCE

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The theme offers a special connection to Gordon, who toured and loved Spain — Barcelona, Madrid and Seville — 22 years ago while in college on a two-month excursion through Europe.

Thomas' full food menu will include a tapas bar and items such as andalusian pinchitos morunos, which is chicken and pork meat skewers, and pisto manchego, which is vegetable stew. Plus, chef Carrie Douglas from the local Courtyard Restaurant inside Columbus North High School is preparing desserts.

To give the party a more authentic feel, organizers are hoping for one thing more.

"We hope," Gordon said, "that people will be willing to dress in some sort of Spanish attire or some sort of flamenco attire."

https://www.heraldtimesonline.com/entertainment/review-wilkins-leads-orchestra-in-familiar-works-for-an-afternoon/article_24aff566-c8c3-11e7-8a10-e774c1d9d3d6.html

FEATURED

Review: Wilkins leads orchestra in familiar works for an afternoon well spent

By Peter Jacobi | H-T Reviewer | pjacobi@heraldt.com Nov 13, 2017

Since those of you who are reading this review — meant to cover a splendid Concert Orchestra program on Sunday afternoon — are most likely to have read my review in Monday's Herald-Times of IU Opera Theater's production of "It's a Wonderful Life," I'm going to begin this report in an uncommon manner.

I did something unpardonable for journalists in that opera review, which was to misidentify two cast members. I praised Cadie Jordan for her fine work as the angel Clara, as she probably did but on a night I did not see the opera; it was soprano Anne Slovin who played the part on Saturday, when I was in the Musical Arts Center viewing the opera. And I also saw soprano Virginia Mims, not Rachel Mikol, as Mary, the wife of central character George Bailey.

Forgive me, Anne Slovin and Virginia Mims. Forgive me, readers. I believe all else was correct.

Which leads me to the event I actually sat down to cover in this review. Thomas Wilkins and the Indiana University Concert Orchestra offered praiseworthy accounts of two familiar masterworks: Beethoven's C Major Piano Concerto No. 1 and Brahms' Symphony No. 3 in F Major. For the Beethoven, Maestro Wilkins and the orchestra had Timothy Stephenson, the Jacobs School of Music's Beethoven Piano Concerto Competition winner, as soloist. An excellent one he turned out to be.

Wilkins is a graceful and relaxed and definitely commanding figure on the podium. He gives clear guidance to his players, the result being clarity of response from his musicians. He also aims for a resonance of sound, a keen sense for ensemble, and an instrumental lushness satisfying to hear. For the Beethoven, he added the necessary task of coordination, complementing the orchestral portion of the score with that for soloist Stephenson.

The Concert Orchestra carried out its task just fine. As for pianist Stephenson, he spun a beautiful performance of this delectable and joyous piece, generously supplying a beginning-to-end finger work both admirably nimble and assured. What's more, young Stephenson was stylistically in tandem with the score. The performance amounted to lovely and lyrical and technically exciting Beethoven. When, on conclusion, the audience broke into enthusiastic applause, Stephenson bowed with seeming pride and a broad smile on his face, as well he should have.

Brahms' Symphony No. 3 spreads more emotional sunshine than do his other symphonies, probably due in part to the fact that a 26-year-old contralto had come into his 50-year-old life. The good-mood feeling is easy to hear. Not so evident to a listener is the complex architecture of the symphony, which calls for a savvy conductor, in performance, to discover and build that structure into a glowing tonal sculpture. At this task of designing, shaping, building, Maestro Wilkins is a master. He proved it once again on Sunday. This reading of the Brahms Third was jubilant.

Consequently, the afternoon was well spent.

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