

Coop's Mozart enchants

REVIEW

CALGARY PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA BAROQUE SERIES,
THOMAS RÖSNER, CONDUCTOR, JANE COOP, PIANO
AND TISHA MURVIHILL, HARP
JACK SINGER HALL

KENNETH DELONG
FOR THE CALGARY HERALD

Saving the best for last, the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra concluded its survey of Mozart's late piano concertos with the composer's final work in this genre, the great Piano Concerto No. 27 in B-flat major.

Jane Coop, Canada's premier Mozart pianist, was on hand to do honours at the keyboard, giving another spirited, musically sophisticated account of one of her favourite composer's music.

Coop is an especially fluent technician, able to find the magical balance between speed and articulation necessary to project the "singing-allegro" style that lies at the heart of this most elegant of concertos.

Favouring brisk tempos and a no-nonsense stance to musical values, Coop still gave the concerto's moments of sadness their due, not only in the slow movement, but in the Olympian opening movement, one of Mozart's finest creations.

Austrian conductor Thomas Rösner, in his Calgary debut, proved to be an idiomatic conductor of classic-period music, bringing to the accompaniment of the concerto a sympathetic partnership.

He was heard to even better effect in the concluding work, Haydn's playfully bombastic Symphony No. 82 in C major, with its bagpipe effects and prominent use of the timpani.

Keeping a clear pulse at all times, Rösner emphasized the virile side of Haydn's muse, balancing the phrases with a fine sense of contrast and building the musical paragraphs to convincing cadences. The two inner movements fared especially well, Haydn's clever orchestration highlighted to produce moments of humour and gaiety.

The orchestra, playing as a single instrument, performed the symphony with remarkable clarity of texture and centred tone, always a sign of common purpose between the leader and the led.

The moment of style contrast came in the little-heard *Danses sacree et profane* for Harp and Strings by Debussy.

Harpist Tisha Murvihill was the soloist, playing the demanding solo part with complete technical control and a due sense of Debussy's highly refined, polished idiom.

Given her obvious gifts, one can only hope that she will be given more opportunities to be heard.

In all, this was an evening of polished, sophisticated music making fully deserving of its abundant applause.