Dancing at A Musical Feast

by Jan Jezioro

The innovative musical series adds LehrerDance to its menu

A Musical Feast, the musical ensemble-in-residence at the Burchfield Penney Art Center, opens its 2011-2012 series with a concert in its home in the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Auditorium, on Sunday, November 20, at 2pm. Founded by its artistic director, retired Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra concertmaster Charles Haupt, A Musical Feast has made it its mission to present concert events that mix traditional, established classical favorites with more contemporary and newly composed works, while even throwing poetry readings into the mix.

Of course, if you want to remain precariously perched on the contemporary cutting edge, you can’t just stand still, repeating the kinds of things that you have done previously, no matter how innovative and well received they might have been. So, Charles Haupt and his wife, photographer Irene Haupt, who serves as the organization’s general manager, decided to add another dimension to their programs, beginning a new collaboration with LehrerDance, Buffalo’s premier professional touring dance company.

Lynn Shapiro wrote in Dance magazine that “[t]he Chicago premiere of LehrerDance took the house not so much by storm as by quantum physics. As part of the month-long Dance Chicago festival, Jon Lehrer’s strikingly original choreography transformed the stage into an energy field of super-charged particles. Rich movement invention coupled with high-risk partnering were signatures of Lehrer’s choreography throughout the four pieces. He seamlessly integrated his dancers’ gymnastic skills with modern dance forms. Surprise landings and tableaux that sliced space into unexpected geometrics kept the audience on the edge of their seats.”

LehrerDance troupe members Theodore Krzykowski and Rachael Humphrey are featured in Morphic Slip, a Jon Lehrer choreographed pas de deux, to the music of Aphex Twin, one of the pseudonyms used by the contemporary Irish-born electronic musician and composer Richard David James. Reviewing a previous performance, the Buffalo News noted that “[i]n Morphic Slip, the dancers costumed in bobsled racer-looking suits, moved like reptiles along the stage floor before melding into more sculptural intertwining of bodies.”

Czech composer Leoš Janáček based his work for cello and piano, Pohádka (Fairy Tale), on a Russian epic poem by Vasily Zhukovsky. The veiled compositional style of the work has been compared to the composer’s highly atmospheric work for piano, In the Mists. Dancers Immanuel Naylor and Colleen Walsh will interpret Lehrer’s choreographic treatment of the work as performed by cellist Jonathan Golove and pianist Eric Huebner.

Huebner will also be the soloist in Igor Stravinsky’s challenging tour-de-force based on music from the composer’s ballet, Trois mouvements de Petroushka, a work that Stravinsky composed for his friend, the great virtuoso pianist, Arthur Rubinstein.

Sunday’s program also has a decided Argentine flavor, with Eastman School of Music violin virtuoso Charles Castleman joining with Buffalo pianist Claudia Hoca for a performance of Andre Previn’s infectiously delightful Tango, Song and Dance, composed by Previn as a present for his then new bride, Anne-Sophie Mutter.

The young Buffalo-based composer Moshe Shulman dedicated his Argentine Tango to Argentine/German composer Mauricio Kagel and all tango musicians in the world. Shulman himself will play the accordion part, along with violinist Charles Castleman, double bassist Julia Shulman, and pianist...
Eric Huebner, in a work which is described as being energetic, at moments even brutal, while also being at the same time overly melancholic, as any genuine tango should be. In an interesting twist on tradition, the score calls for the musicians to both behave and vocalize according to how playing this passionate music makes them feel. Shulman recently composed and performed the very effective music for Subversive Theatre’s unforgettable production of Marat/Sade.

Tickets are $10 general admission, $5 for Burchfield Penney members and Buffalo State students. For more information, visit www.amusicalfeast.com or www.burchfieldpenney.org, or call 878-6011.

Rare But Well Done

The Buffalo State College Philharmonia Orchestra, under the direction of its music director Paul Ferington, who is also the staff conductor of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, will present its opening concert of the 2011-2012 season, on Tuesday evening, November 22, at 7:30pm, in the Performing Arts Center of Rockwell Hall. The BSCP, which made its debut just two years ago, comprises instrumental musicians, including Buffalo State College music major and non-majors, community musicians, talented high school students, BPO musicians, and BSC faculty/staff musicians. It is the only college-community orchestra of its kind in the region, providing students with the opportunity to rehearse and perform with seasoned and experience community musicians.

The adventurously programmed concert features a rare live performance of Igor Stravinsky’s first published work, his very atypical Symphony in E-flat, Opus 1, and includes British composer Edward German’s Three Dances from Nell Gwyn and Tchaikovsky’s Festival Coronation March, while cellists Eva Herer and Drew Cone will be the featured soloists in Vivaldi’s Concerto for Two Cellos.

Admisson to the concert is free. For more information, visit www.buffalostate.edu.

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