

Concert Reviews

Barrie Concert Review – Saturday January 26th, 2019 at 7:30 p.m. - *Nurhan Arman Conducts Sinfonia Toronto and Pianist Sofya Melikyan*

submitted by Sandra Ruttan

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Mmm...Mozart and Mendelssohn

On January 26, the Barrie Concert Association presented Sinfonia Toronto, conducted by Nurhan Arman, and Pianist Sofya Melikyan, in a concert featuring music by composers, Mozart and Mendelssohn. A large crowd filled the auditorium at Hiway Pentecostal Church and the air was thick with anticipation. Sinfonia Toronto is a world class, world touring, chamber orchestra made up of virtuosic string players. Their conductor, Maestro Arman, has an international reputation. In Canada, besides conducting Sinfonia Toronto, he has been the

Music Director of the North Bay Symphony, the Northern Music Festival and Symphony New Brunswick. However, he also works with many other orchestras around the world, from Moscow to Mexico, from Armenia to Brazil and with great acclaim. It is no wonder that expectations for the evening were high.



Pianist, Sofya Melikyan, who joined Sinfonia Toronto for the second half of the program, studied in Madrid, Paris and New York. She has toured throughout Europe, North America, Japan and Australia, won international competitions and been

broadcast live by influential radio stations around the world. A concert combining the skills and talents of Arman and his group of string virtuosos with those of Melikyan was sure to be quite incredible.

It was. Sinfonia Toronto, with the exception of the cellos, stood through the performance, their bodies swaying slightly as they played. Their synchronicity of sound, perfectly together, perfectly in tune with each other, expressing as one the crescendos and diminuendos, was magical. So were the gestures of Maestro Arman which sometimes seemed to pull sound out of the air, shape it, and make it disappear again, like a master conjurer. When Melikyan joined them, she played with fluidity and passion to match. The effect was a wonderful conversation between the pearly tones of the Shigeru Piano and the encompassing timbre of the strings.

The program of pieces was also compelling. Sinfonia Toronto opened with Quartet No. 7 in E-flat Major, by Mozart. From the light heartedness of the Allegro, to the serenity of the Adagio, to the witty excitement of the Presto, the piece was both beautiful and beautifully played. This was followed by the Quartet in F minor by Felix Mendelssohn. Composed while Mendelssohn was mourning the death of his sister, the quartet expresses emotions that we do not usually embrace: foreboding, anxiety, agitation, deep, deep sadness, and even anguish. Yet, in the music, these feelings become meaningful, connective and leave one feeling uplifted, somehow, regardless.

The final piece of the evening was Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No. 2. Dramatic, passionate, tender, and joyful, it struck the perfect note on which to end a rich and wonderful musical evening.