

MUSIC

If Music be the Food of Love...

By Hanns F. Skoutajan

"And he plays the piano good, like a real piano player should: Horowitz, hear, hear!"
(Allan Sherman)

It wasn't Vladimir Horowitz, who "tickled the ivories" at Southminster United Church on Wednesday September 25th, but Mauro Bartoli, a young Italian born pianist. He played on the beautiful Heintzman 9-foot concert grand, built in 1904, which for many years was the stage

grand at the venerable Massey Hall in downtown Toronto. Indeed, years ago Horowitz himself had played this very instrument.

Roland Graham, organist and choirmaster of Southminster United Church in Old Ottawa South, and if I dare say, "impresario," has initiated and directed Doors Open for Music at Southminster, a Wednesday noon-hour series begun earlier this year. This fall it will comprise 11 concerts that are affordable to all; concerts are free, though a freewill offering at the door is always appreciated.

Bartoli, who has a long list of accomplishments, is presently Artist-in-Residence at Carleton University. He, at an early age, has acquired an international reputation that spans his homeland, Latin America, the United States and Canada.

His presentation on Wednesday in my estimation rivals any piano concert that I have attended. It was a wide-ranging repertoire from Johannes Brahms, the Intermezzo from Op. 118, concluding with George Gershwin's inimitable Rhapsody in Blue. Schumann and Liszt were also part of his outstanding performance.

But what brought me to my feet with loud "WOWS" and "BRAVOS" was his rendition of the Allegro da Concerto by Enrique Granados. I hurried to acquire his disc containing that performance after the show.

Speaking to Graham after the concert, which by the way brought 150 people to Southminster's hard pews, I marveled at the rich resources of musical talent that is found in Ottawa and indeed all over Canada. We are so much more than "hewers of wood and haulers of water", or the modern equivalent thereof. Roland's concerts

showcase much talent, giving young artists an opportunity to be genuinely supported and appreciated.

Granted, these are short concerts, more than hors d'oeuvres, but a little less filling than a main course, but enough to introduce you to performers and music, some familiar and others a pleasant and surprising introduction of "something entirely new."

If Mauro Bartoli's concert presages what is to come then my outburst of "WOWS" at last week's concert should be prolonged throughout the season. All of this proves that Ottawa isn't an entirely boring government town, but indeed is rich in culture.

Across the country and abroad as well, churches have taken on the role of concert hall. There is nothing new in that. Even in the Middle Ages, cathedrals hosted musical events - granted most of them of a "sacred" nature - but then that's what most music was about. What better place for that Food of Love than a house of worship. Rejoice in this rich heritage! Enjoy and support it!



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