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## LSO dazzles with 'From Russia with Love'

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The western hemisphere has gained a lot from Russia. Most valuable, perhaps, is the abundant music that has enhanced our lives for the past two centuries.

Lafayette Symphony Orchestra Conductor Nicholas Palmer took his stance before the orchestra on Saturday evening and a copious serving of Russian music was offered -- "From Russia with Love." This was not the Sean Connery 007 movie type but three works featuring some of Russia's best composers.

The final offering was the guest appearance of a brilliant up-and-coming violinist, Elena Urioste, who dazzled the audience with a luminous and exciting rendition of Tchaikovsky's "Violin Concerto in D Major."

Palmer programmed two other Russian works of equal merit and beauty but lesser known, especially to Lafayette audiences, Mikhail Glinka's boisterous "Overture to Russian and Ludmilla" and Vasily Kalinnikov's "Symphony No. 2 in A Major." These two works are seldom performed outside Russia, and Palmer, who is basing this entire season on music from around the world, chose wisely in bringing them to LSO patrons.

Glinka is often identified as the "father" of Russian nationalism in music, and indeed this overture foretold elements in later works by Russian composers. The same was true of the Kalinnikov work when themes and echoes of Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov and Moussorgsky were felt if not actually heard.

It is a pity that the "Symphony in A Major" is not programmed more often as it is an energetic and thematically elegant work that the Lafayette audience immediately found to be very much to their liking. To top off the performance in which the orchestra responded brilliantly, Maestro Palmer conducted the entire score from memory.

The communication between players and conductor was immediately apparent. Nice going, Nick. The total sound was enhanced by the addition of an orchestra shell.

The Tchaikovsky concerto was the most familiar of the three pieces, and Orioste's musical identification with the composer's intention was breathless. Furious tempos and two extended solo cadenzas were flawlessly executed, and the seamless communication between soloist and orchestra was exquisite.

Tchaikovsky wrote only one concerto for violin and orchestra although some historians aver that he started but never completed others. None of these made their way to realization and the composer disdained the thought he could match the success of the "D Major."

A reminder: Applause between movements of a symphony or any musical work containing such sections is unnecessary and often unwelcome to the performers as it may interrupt the forward flow of the work. Save your applause until the piece is finished.

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