

Courier Mail
7 March 2001
EXTRA

Gershwin hits the right note

An American in Paris

Maestro Concert 2
Queensland Symphony
Orchestra
Conductor: Johannes Fritzsch
Cello: Mats Rondin
Concert Hall, QPAC
Reviewer: Suzannah Conway
Reviewed: Saturday, March 5

FOLLOWING the Spirit of Italy theme of the first 2011 Maestro Concert, featuring two Respighi pieces and a wonderful interpretation by Rudolf Koelman of Paganini's second Violin Concerto, the second concert in the series shifted to the jazz influence.

Gershwin's score of *An American in Paris* perfectly captures the colours and texture of the City of Light in the 1920s, as seen through the impressionable eyes of a naive American tourist.

Under Fritzsch, such quintessential American music was beautifully realised, exacting the right mood and style from the opening repeated theme of the visitor strolling the city to the energetic rhythms of the French atmosphere, including the taxi horns.

Well paced "blues" sections offered muted trumpets perfectly underscoring a brash cacophony of sound.

There was confident playing across all sections; sensitive violin and bassoon solos and additionally-engaged saxophonists, with a warmth and vibrancy from the brass, including principal trumpet and tuba, as well as the percussion.

A quirky piece with its range of musical styles, Friedrich Gulda's Cello Concerto mixes Viennese classicism with jazz to produce a heady concoction.

Swedish cellist, Mats Rondin, making his QSO debut, relished this opportunity to showcase his superior technical skills.

Alternating between electric and acoustic cellos, the heavily orchestrated *Overture* and *Finale* favoured the electric, though harsh amplification was irritating.

An American in Paris
Maestro Concert 2
Queensland Symphony Orchestra
Conductor Johannes Fritzsch
Cello Mats Rondin

Concert Hall, QPAC

Reviewer: Suzannah Conway

Reviewed: Saturday 5 March 2011

Following *The Spirit of Italy* theme of the first 2011 Maestro Concert, featuring two Respighi pieces and a wonderful interpretation by Rudolf Koelman of Paganini's second Violin Concerto, the second Concert in the series shifted to *The Jazz Influence*. The contrast could not have been starker.

Gershwin's score of *An American in Paris* perfectly captures the colours and texture of the City of Light in the 1920's, as seen through the impressionable eyes of a naïve American tourist. Under Fritzsch, such quintessential American music was beautifully realised, exacting the right mood and style from the opening repeated theme of the visitor strolling the city to the energetic rhythms of the French atmosphere, including the taxicab horns. Well paced 'blues' sections offered muted trumpets perfectly underscoring a brash cacophony of sound.

There was confident playing across all sections; sensitive violin and bassoon solos and additionally-engaged saxophonists, with a warmth and vibrancy from the brass, including principal trumpet and tuba, as well as the ubiquitous percussion.

A quirky piece with its eclectic range of musical styles, Friedrich Gulda's *Cello Concerto* mixes Viennese classicism with jazz influences to produce a heady concoction that mostly worked well.

Swedish cellist, Mats Rondin, making his QSO debut, relished this opportunity to showcase his superior technical skills. Alternating between electric and acoustic cellos, the heavily orchestrated *Overture* and *Finale* favoured the electric instrument though the harsh amplification was irritating.

In the classic acoustically-played second movement, *Idylle*, Rondin demonstrated his virtuosity with finesse.

The free-fall *Cadenza*, degenerating into a Waltzing Matilda theme, produced laughter from the audience but was too self-indulgent and far too long to have resonance.

Closing with Prokofiev's mighty *Fifth Symphony in B flat, Op.100*, written in the closing months of World War II, Fritzsch was in his element marshalling orchestral forces for this epic Russian work, intended as a hymn to man's freedom and spirit.

A classically structured work in four movements, the *Andante* movement offered lush strings with a powerful drum and piano coda.

The *Allegro* introduced a nicely paced dance element from strings and woodwind, while the dreamy quality of the slower *Adagio* built to a powerful climax of brass and percussion, giving way to the playful *Allegro* of the final victorious movement with its military overtones.