

Success of *FANTASTICAL CREATURES*.

The concert "Fantastical Creatures in Russian Orchestral Music", presented at MacPhail Center for Music on November 2, was a great success.

Many components made this evening truly special: beautiful new concert hall; the orchestra of great musicians assembled by the artistic director and conductor Marina Liadova; unique, very well thought of program, enhanced by the costumed characters. The house was full, the atmosphere was joyful and festive, and thus the evening was absolutely delightful.

It is maybe for the first time that the Twin Cities Russian-speaking audience had an opportunity not only to listen to the orchestral music but also enjoy the commentary and acting, which brought the musical images to life. Playing unusual compositions, such as Polka "Bureaucrat" from the ballet "Bolt" by Shostakovich, became quite a remarkable event, just because pieces like this are not performed in the Twin Cities very often.

The programming for the evening was, in my opinion, incredibly well structured: the brilliant dance Trepak from Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker was familiar to everyone in the audience and established a cheerful, festive mood right in the beginning of the concert. Orchestral gems like Chernomor's March, "Kikimora", and "Baba Yaga" created a colorful quilt, combining classical and impressionistic influences.

A brilliant addition to the program was a well-known singer Lynne Gardow, who presented two *romances*, or art songs. Her performance of Rachmaninov's *Don't Sing to Me, O Beautiful Maiden* was truly beautiful, and the audience was simply mesmerized. Everything during that concert fell into place. From friendly ushers and volunteers, who helped create right ambiance in the Antonello hall, and professionally looking booklets written by Dimitry Shapovalov; from Marina Liadova, the conductor in tuxedo, with the full orchestra on stage, to the emcees Masha Petrenko and Shana Eisenberg, and even to the fairy tales creatures themselves, strutting among the grinning audience members. The public was also very pleased by unexpected jazzy hit "First date Blunder" played as an encore and gave the musicians an enthusiastic round of applause.

And, of course, how can we forget about those who made this concert possible! A generous support was provided by the International Steel Supply and Hennepin Industries, as well as by numerous people of the community. Among major donors was also Mikhail Liadov, Marina Liadova's brother.

A cozy and charmingly friendly reception followed, filled with timely delicious treats, sharing of impressions and warm discussions.

Congratulations to Marina and her team on a great job!

We really hope more concerts are yet to come.

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