

Concert Review 1

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Performance Inspired by Love

On Tuesday, March 6, 2012, I had the privilege of attending the Russian Souvenir duo consisting of Olga Dashevskaya on piano and Lydia Sviatlovskaya on the violin. The concert took place in the Community Room at the Red Rocks Community College Lakewood campus. I felt blessed that the concert was free—normally I would pay for such good entertainment.

The concert had great attendance, though I did feel that most people were there on a class requirement. It was evident in the dress of the participants that not everyone knew the customs of a concert—even my date was in jeans and a tee shirt. I hope that did not take away from the performance, as they performed flawlessly and were very entertaining.

My favorite part was the dialogue between the pieces. It was clear the performers knew exactly what they were playing, where it originated, and the importance of the pieces. It was nice to have some of the background knowledge about the pieces they chose and the composers' history. It really added to the connection I made with the sounds that followed. The dialogue also made the transition from piece to piece clear and easy to follow, preparing the audience for the next performance part.

My favorite piece was definitely the Igor Stravinsky piece, Danse Russe from the ballet Petrushka. As soon as this started, the crowd sat up a little straighter. This upbeat piece immediately caught my attention with the unique use of pizzicato, which is what I know to be violin plucking. I have always liked this unique sound—something so inharmonic coming from one of the most beautiful sounding instruments out there. I loved that this piece gave both the pianist and the violinist the opportunity to show off their skills. The rhythm was very quick—maybe quadruple? I liked that it was presto tempo—I

could almost envision the dancers on the stage. The texture of the piece felt homophonic, where when one instrument was soloing, the other was in support, and when they played together it did not feel like they were competing.

The artists played the piece phenomenally. It was attention-grabbing, well-timed, and most of all, they looked like they were enjoying the piece. They were extremely professional and well-versed with each piece, and minus a little bit of occasional tuning, played with precision and chemistry. I had never heard Danse Russe before, but found it playing in my head long after the concert was over. To me, this makes the performance a success!

My second favorite piece of the evening was the Sergei Prokofiev's Cinderella Waltz. Considerably slow for what I would consider a waltz (a dance), this piece was played so intricately that I couldn't help but get lost in it. This was a "sit back and close your eyes" kind of piece, and that is exactly what I did. It was peaceful, angelic, and romantic. The tempo seemed almost adagio, one of the slowest pieces I have heard and enjoyed.

On my program, I noted this piece to be one of my favorites, most notably because of the passion with which the performers presented the piece to us. They were so precise, so into the music themselves, they couldn't help but take the audience with them. For a slow piece, my attention was 100% on them, and my mind gave way to the melody of notes being played. Both Lydia and Olga seemed lost in the piece, at times closing their own eyes and playing from memory. Seeing how committed to the piece they were, one couldn't help but feel the same way.

Overall, my favorite moment of the night came when discussing Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's pieces. Olga mentioned that Tchaikovsky was asked his inspiration when he

writes, and he said, "Only love can inspire me to write these pieces." To write something that will eventually be performed for years and years takes more than talent; it takes a drive and a passion only found through true love. These composers truly loved what they did, and it shows in their work. The performers truly love to perform, and it sure showed in that small community room. I felt honored to experience their passion and love for this music, and felt a much deeper connection with the pieces than I would have had just listening to them on Cengage.