

Violinist gives pleasing concert performance

By GERRY WALLERSTEIN
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Violinist Keiko Rushlander was the guest soloist with the Erie Chamber Orchestra in Friday's concert at St. Patrick Church.

Her performance of Aram Khachaturian's Concerto in D Minor exhibited a polished technique, with strong attacks and great flexibility. Her tone was particularly notable in the long solo cadenzas, but was somewhat obscured in the low register during those sections played with the orchestra.

Khachaturian (1903-1978) was strongly influenced by the folk songs of his native Armenia. His music combines the tonalities, rhythms, Oriental effects and dramatic content of his heritage.

This concerto in three movements follows the classical format. The first movement, *allegro con fermezza*, has a vigorous first theme, a lyrical second theme, major development, a long cadenza, and a recapitulation of the first two themes, capped by a large coda.

The slow second movement, *andante sostenuto*, is a poignant lament. It opens with an odd, unsettled introduction that segues into a

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waltz-like accompaniment for the soloist's entry which is dominated by rhapsodic embellishments of the principal theme.

The finale is a rondo with heavy fold content that gives it a gypsy-like flavor. The racy but gently dance-like quality of the first theme is balanced by very dramatic episodes.

Rushlander's performance elicited several curtain calls and a standing ovation from the large audience.

After intermission, Bruce Morton Wright and his musicians presented the Symphony No. 1 of Alexander Borodin (1833-1887).

Borodin was the driving force behind the development of the nationalistic movement in Russian music, despite the fact that the respected chemist composed only in his spare time.

Rather than using actual Russian folk music, Borodin developed his own melodic language instead of following the lead of nationalistic composers in Western Europe. His originality is exemplified by the two familiar melodies from his opera "Prince Igor" which were adapted as the popular songs "Stranger in

Paradise" and "And This is My Beloved."

Symphony No. 1's first movement, *adagio-allegro*, opens with deep, Russian-sounding chords, followed by a melodic theme that seems to skip along. Syncopation and very bold orchestration add to the movement's effectiveness.

The second movement, *scherzo* and *trio*, is lively and lilting, with an almost galloping melodic theme that is folk-like and very Russian in nature.

A sad, lamenting theme with a lovely melodic sound marks the third movement, *andante*. Oriental effects and the very lush orchestration, which uses the violins and woodwinds in a sighing manner, add to the movement's charm.

The rapid and forceful dance-like rhythms and bold orchestration of the finale, *andante molto vivo*, give the symphony a robust conclusion.

An enjoyable performance by Wright and the orchestra, it received several curtain calls.

About the author : Gerry Wallerstein is the classical music reviewer of the *Erie Daily Times*.
