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# Scott Cantrell in New York: Carnegie Hall acoustics exalt Fort Worth Symphony

CLASSICAL REVIEW

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HENNY RAY ABRAMS/Special Contributor

**Cellist Alban Gerhardt builds drama in a new piece that the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra played for its Carnegie Hall debut on Saturday.**

NEW YORK – For more than a century, the world's greatest orchestras have played here. Tchaikovsky, Mahler, Strauss and Stravinsky conducted on its stage.

On Saturday evening, the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra gave its first concert at Carnegie Hall, before a full audience that repeatedly responded with loud applause, bravos and standing ovations.

A stunning account of Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony represented a quantum leap in expressivity and emotional intensity for FWSO music director Miguel Harth-Bedoya. The orchestra also gave the first performance of a new piece by Argentinian composer Osvaldo Golijov and rounded out the program with the Brahms Double Concerto.

The Tchaikovsky was hardly recognizable as the same piece heard two weeks ago in Bass Hall. What had been a well-drilled but largely soulless performance was transformed into a passionate, gut-gripping experience.

The first-movement introduction now had more forward motion, but also new pliancy and emotional import. In the slow movement, Mr. Harth-Bedoya gave the music plenty of room to expand and contract, sometimes daringly so. The third-movement waltz had a lovely spring in its step and crisp snap to its pluckings. The finale progressed from weighty proclamation to an electrifying close.

The Carnegie acoustics gave the orchestra more depth of tone than at Bass Hall, fine as it is. Even so, the strings seemed to find new richness of their own. The brasses laid on impressive dins at climaxes, but also produced firm pianissimos.

Principal horn Mark Houghton spun out the famous slow-movement solo with assurance and eloquence, getting a well-deserved hug from Mr. Harth-Bedoya at the symphony's end. Other particularly fine solo contributions came from clarinetist Ana Victoria Luperi and bassoonist Kevin Hall.

Mr. Golijov's new *Mariel* is actually an orchestration and expansion of a nine-year-old piece for cello and marimba, a memorial to a friend killed in a car crash. Thirteen minutes long in its new guise, it's mostly solemn and reflective. Much is made of the solo cello gently keening in a high register. According to the composer, accompanying pulsings evoke light flickering through trees along a highway. Chimes reinforce the memorial solemnity, with movie-music brass chords near the end.

It's a pleasant piece, if not a life-changing experience. Cellist Alban Gerhardt joined in a loving performance, and the composer was warmly applauded at the end.

The Brahms would have been better if Mr. Gerhardt hadn't often played too loudly, and sometimes bowed too coarsely, to balance violinist Augustin Hadelich's small but sweet tone and aristocratic reserve. Mr. Harth-Bedoya and the orchestra did their parts well, but without quite working magic.

Mr. Harth-Bedoya and the orchestra present a Family Concert Sunday afternoon at Carnegie Hall.