

Newton composer wows BSO

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What if classical music wasn't born in Germany? What if it were born in Argentina, with roots that spread to [Israel](#) and Romania? What if our Beethoven is Osvaldo Golijov and his music is what our children's children will be talking about?

What if? The Boston Symphony Orchestra gave some idea Thursday with an amazing program under the baton of conductor Miguel Harth-Bedoya that featured the world's greatest cellist and arguably the world's greatest musician, Yo-Yo Ma.

Two pieces by Newton resident Golijov began the evening. First, "Ausencia," a two-movement work for solo cello and string orchestra. Deeply emotional, it begins with what can only be called a cadenza. Ma played solo for almost 10 minutes before the orchestra joined in for a monumental exploitation of great ideas, great playing and great orchestration.

Next came Golijov's "Azul," a more traditional concerto written in four movements with two brief codas, both with emotion and strong musical language.

If the concept of world music didn't mean people from other countries playing odd-shaped drums and blowing funny wind instruments, maybe people would start taking Golijov more seriously. His music means something: It has angles, shapes, different textures and sounds. And it has meaning that can only be explained by hearing it.

That's what real music is all about. "Azul" incorporates serious orchestral interaction with lyrical interaction from the soloist in a way that melds soloist and ensemble.

A fine evening of music ended with Dvorak's Symphony No. 8, also known as his Four Songs with Orchestra. A bright reading by Harth-Bedoya gave life to this familiar work and the orchestra seemed to rise to the occasion: a fitting coda to an amazing evening featuring two outstanding new works and Ma as soloist.

Boston Symphony Orchestra at Symphony Hall, Thursday night. Also yesterday and tonight.