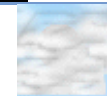




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Monday, May 9, 2005

# Thayer Symphony concert spotlights themes from films

## MUSIC REVIEW

By David Lasky TELEGRAM & GAZETTE

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**FITCHBURG**— Thayer Symphony Orchestra's 31st season concluded with a sparkling "Spring Pops" concert Saturday night before a full house of nearly 1,100 in the Stratos G. Dukakis Performing Arts Center at Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School.

Under the baton of Toshimasa Francis Wada, and sponsored by Wireway/Husky Corp., the concert centered around music associated with films.

The program's first half was made up of fare that would be familiar to almost no one, as it derived from the silent movies that graced Worcester's Strand Theater during the 1920s. Since the Strand had a house orchestra, various stock music was arranged and played for the films shown there. Contemporary accounts published in this newspaper reported what music was played on certain dates.

Using this information, John Dorenkamp, retired English professor at the College of the Holy Cross, crafted a whimsical and informative narration in which he (sometimes speculatively) placed various music with certain films. A huge proportion of these films starred the legendary Tom Mix, whom Dorenkamp confessed to having seen perform live.

The music was pure camp — and absolutely delightful fare for a season-ending pops concert. Using a scaled-down orchestra, TSO played such musical vignettes as "The Sharpshooter" by Floyd J. St. Clair, "Prelude Futuristique" by Bertram Strawley, "Indian War Dance" by J.S. Zamecnik, "Shadows of Night" by Gaston Borch, "Battle and Disturbance" by G. Becce, and so on.

As Dorenkamp pointed out, the titles of these pieces were nothing more than indicators of the kind of mood the music was attempting to depict.

To conclude the first half, a so-called "Imaginary Movie," created and narrated by Dorenkamp, was given musical life by means of Allan Mueller's witty orchestrations of various excerpts from well-known classical and film themes. Not only was it all done in great fun, but it was all well-delivered.

The evening's highlight was the stylish, showy and inspirational singing of Fitchburg native Wil Darcangelo and his highly talented entourage, Clarion. Having sung and acted in various parts of the world, Darcangelo, at age 35, is now devoting himself exclusively to singing.

Judging from the polished and professional manner in which he performed Saturday night, it would seem that this is the right course to take. Currently working on a recording project, Darcangelo and Clarion have already created and recorded their first single, "Carry On"; this song is now the theme music for the North Central Massachusetts chapter of the United Way. Darcangelo previously performed with TSO as

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part of the Valentines' Pops concert in February 2004.

Clarion consists of Shana Carr, Angel Climes, Steve Gags, Matt Jones and Civ Rosado; the 17-year-old Rosado is one of Darcangelo's arrangers, and Saturday night's performance of his fine arrangement of "Rainbow Connection" was his first for a symphony orchestra.

Guest singer Beverly Ward, who is not a part of Clarion, offered a suave and sassy account of her duet with Darcangelo, "Here's to Love," from the 2003 film "Down With Love."

Other highlights included Climes' electrifying account of "Down the Road" from "The Wiz," Darcangelo's tender interpretation of "When You Wish Upon A Star" from "Pinocchio" and excerpts from "West Side Story" as arranged and orchestrated by Mueller.

And to conclude the program, the ensemble brought down the house with an impassioned rendition of "Let the River Run," which was immediately greeted by a prolonged standing ovation.

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