

Cleveland Trombone Seminar: Shachar Israel recital (June 15)

by Daniel Hathaway



Modeling consummate artistry for the 35 participants and associates in the opening performance of the 2018 Cleveland Trombone Seminar in CSU's Drinko Hall on Saturday afternoon, June 16, founder and director Shachar Israel showed how varied and engaging a program of transcriptions for the instrument can be.

Israel, who is assistant principal in The Cleveland Orchestra, began his recital with J.S. Bach's "Rondo e Gavotte" from the solo violin Partita, BWV 1006, one of the pieces included on golden discs aboard the Voyager spacecraft in 1977, and now somewhere in outer space. His playing was similarly stellar — he gently negotiated Bach's bouncy leaps with only a few nicked notes toward the end.

Brahms' *Clarinet Sonata in E-flat*, Op. 120, No. 2, sometimes appropriated by

violinists, sounded right at home on a different wind instrument, especially in the hands of a player with such a fine sense of tone color and wide range of dynamics. Israel made a striking moment out of the long, descending chromatic line in the final movement, and pianist Martha Locker matched the soloist's timbre masterfully.

Originally written for solo soprano and an orchestra of cellos, Heitor Villa-Lobos' *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5* featured Israel as the vocalist in his own arrangement, supported by a staff quartet of trombones — Chris Graham, Mary Tyler, Whitney

Clair, and Wes Thompson (bass). The lyrical first movement was alluring, the second part, Dança (Martelo), simply beautiful.

A spirited arrangement of Piazzolla's *La Muerte del Angel* by Canadian Brass trombonist Achilles Liarmakopoulos had Locker tapping on the underside of the piano. Foot stamping and bent pitches added similar Argentine flavors to Israel's arrangements and spirited performances of Piazzolla's *Oblivion* and *Libertango*.

Throughout the hour-long recital, Shachar Israel recognized and thanked his staff and colleagues for their past service and assistance in launching the seventh annual Cleveland Trombone Seminar, which would keep all those slides in motion for the next week. He returned to South American music for a pair of encores, ending with a virtuosic toot through the Brazilian tune *Tico-tico*.

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