

## Plano joins Omni Quartet on CIPC Concert Series (June 8)

by Daniel Hathaway



When Roberto Plano won gold in the Cleveland International Piano Competition in 2001, the contest hadn't yet established a chamber music requirement in addition to solo recitals and a concerto. Plano more than made up for that in his most recent return to Cleveland. On Saturday

evening, June 8, he joined the Omni Quartet to end his CIPC Concert Series recital in CIM's Kulas Hall with a stunning performance of Brahms' f-minor Piano Trio.

Before that, the Italian-born pianist threaded together a suite of shorter solo works by European and South American composers, deftly moving through the set without inviting the interruptions of applause. That worked supremely well. Respighi's ruminative, sometimes bluesy *Nocturne* segued into Liszt's *Sposalizio*, the two formally linked by their climactic middle sections.

Plano's own arrangement of Francisco Tárrega's *Recuerdos de Alhambra* featured flamenco gestures successfully transferred to the piano — and impressively brought off. Villa-Lobos' flashy *Impressões seresteiros* contrasted with Ginastera's *Milonga*, "*Canción del Árbol del Olvido*," song-like and surrounded by clouds of fantastical harmonies. The set ended with Ginastera's five *Danzas Criollas*, alternatively poetic, spiked with handfuls of dissonance, touchingly intimate, and toccata-like. The audience responded with an immediate standing ovation.

Usually busy playing in The Cleveland Orchestra, the Omni Quartet only makes sporadic appearances outside Severance Hall, so it was a treat to hear Amy Lee,

Alicia Koelz, Joanna Zakany, and Charles Bernard (sitting in for Tanya Ell) perform with Roberto Plano on Saturday. Playing with equal measures of passion and precision, the five musicians achieved the kind of blend and unanimity normally heard only in long-established chamber ensembles.

From the vibrant unison theme at the beginning to the exciting Presto that closed the fourth movement, Omni and Plano were of a single mind. The Scherzo made such an impact that a handful of listeners wanted to put their hands together prematurely. They got another chance to show their appreciation at the end in an ovation so enthusiastic that the musicians gave them a real encore — a third time through the “A” section of the Scherzo wasn’t one too many. And the combination of piano recital and chamber music was a winning combination that CICP would do well to repeat in the future.

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