

## COYO's European tour send-off concert (June 7)

by Jarrett Hoffman



Before heading out of town on their summer tour, on June 7 Vinay Parameswaran and the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra gave locals at Severance Hall a send-off performance that included all the

music they would carry with them to four European cities.

After a moment of searching, the ensemble locked into and found a nice groove in the fast 16th notes that begin John Adams' *The Chairman Dances (Foxtrot for Orchestra)*. The more relaxed section of the piece brought lush playing from the violins, led by Julia Schilz, and Parameswaran & Co. restored the quicker tempo skillfully. The conductor was a fun-loving and assured presence on the podium throughout.

In Bartók's *Dance Suite*, COYO captured the composer's signature sense of unease: he conjures emotions that seem related not just to the present moment of his narrative, but also to some imagined future — a feat in any art form. Among the strong soloists was the particularly impressive violist Mikel Rollet.

The second half was all Brahms, beginning with his *Tragic Overture*, which would serve as the opener in Sankt Florian — the Adams was to take its place in Vienna, Bratislava, and Budapest. This was the most polished performance of the evening. Kudos to the strings, who played with strong conviction in the dramatic opening, and to hornist Sophie Calabrese, oboist Zach Walker, flutist Lily Waugh, clarinetist Namjun Cho, and bassoonist Josh Prunty for their solo contributions.

Parameswaran brought graceful and elegant gestures to the opening of Brahms' *Symphony No. 2*, and the orchestra obliged with silky playing. The cellos took an excellent turn under the spotlight, as did oboist Amelia Johnson, Waugh, and Calabrese, the owner of a particularly beautiful solo. Lapses of intonation and moments of shy playing were made up for by some extraordinary displays of emotion.

Technology asserted itself in the second half in two different ways. During the Overture, some particularly fine playing brought a little girl sitting in the front row onto her feet so she could capture the moment on her phone. But during quiet moments in the middle two movements of the Symphony, three phones went off — one with a fun tropical ringtone, at least — earning some audible displeasure from some members of the audience.

The finale of the Symphony was a highlight for its verve and passionate phrasing, as well as some delightfully laid-back, luxurious moments from the strings. The trumpets, trombones, and timpani added that special, glorious oomph that helps top off a truly triumphant ending, and the standing ovation and congratulatory whistles drew a stylish encore.

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