



UAPRESENTS STUDENT CRITIC PROGRAM

Venice Baroque Orchestra: “The Seasons Project” Review By Adrian Carballeira

Centennial Hall was filled with the beautiful sounds of Vivaldi and Glass on Sunday as world-renowned violinist Robert McDuffie, playing on a 1735 Guarnerius del Gesu violin, led the Venice Baroque Orchestra in a performance of Vivaldi’s *Le Quattro Stagioni*, Op.8 “The Four Seasons” and Glass’ *Violin Concerto No. 2*. “The American Four Seasons”.

The Venice Baroque Orchestra, playing period instruments while standing, accompanied his performance. The interpretation of Vivaldi’s “The Four Seasons” was stunning, and very well received by the audience, who applauded after nearly every movement. The orchestra and the soloist played together; McDuffie acted as not only the soloist, but also as the conductor.

McDuffie’s manner of playing in front of the orchestra was rather unusual, but effective. For instance, sometimes McDuffie would walk around a little bit on the stage in front of the orchestra as he was playing. This seemed to be so that he could get closer to individual players during pivotal sections in the music. At one point during Vivaldi’s “The Four Seasons”, he even sat down in a chair and put his feet up during a movement in which his part was *tacet*.

Glass’ *Violin Concerto No. 2* “The American Four Seasons” then followed. This concerto, on its world premiere tour, was, not very memorable. The orchestra played it beautifully, as did the soloist, but the music itself was rather repetitive. The composition was not very interesting or unique, because it was driven by the harmonic modulations created by the arpeggios played by the soloist and doubled by the orchestra. Unexpectedly, the orchestra loved the Glass concerto. Once the last notes were played, the audience burst into applause, giving the soloist several curtain calls.

The reason for the pairing of these two seemingly disparate pieces, divided by nearly three centuries of musical development and political, economic and social changes, is due to one element they have in common: they are both examples of program music which attempts to give a musical representation of the four seasons—spring, summer, fall, and winter. Glass wrote this concerto specifically for violinist Robert McDuffie. The composer originally specified which movement pertained to which season, but when the soloist’s interpretation differed from that of the composer, the labels were dropped. Now, it is up to the individual listener to interpret each movement and decide on which season each movement represents.