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## Music review: Miami Symphony Orchestra premieres new work, excels in Bach

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The premiere of a new work for two double basses and orchestra and a series of vignettes based on children's stories and paintings comprised the central portion of the Miami Symphony Orchestra's program Saturday night at Florida International University's Wertheim Auditorium. Still, the music of Bach and Prokofiev proved the concert's high point, displaying concertmaster Daniel Andai's considerable conducting skill and the ensemble's cohesion and polish.

Voces Celestiales (Celestial Voices) by Orlando Jacinto Garcia, director of the FIU School of Music and MISO composer in residence, received its debut performance. The high harmonics for two solo basses is innovative, sometimes accompanied by overlapping vocal lines sung by orchestra members. Solo instruments conjured up eerie sonic effects. Jeff Bradetich, a distinguished pedagogue and exponent of the bass as solo instrument, brilliantly dispatched an angular solo accompanied by timpani. Luis-Gomez Imbert, the orchestra's principal bass, was impressive in an astringent cadenza, at times playing near the instrument's bridge. Both players fearlessly tackled writing that tested the instruments' limits.

Yet for all its imaginative moments, Garcia's score seemed more like a series of episodic cells than a cohesive soundscape and could benefit from astute pruning and tightening. High marks to Andai and the orchestra for a strong performance of highly complex instrumental writing.

MISO has been collaborating with Touching Miami with Love, an after-school program in Overtown, to introduce young children to the symphony orchestra's music and instruments. Principal trumpet Sam Hyken's Children's Stories Suite is based on five of the children's paintings. Each section was preceded by film of the kids narrating their often strange and fantastical tales, their paintings projected on a screen while the music was played. The visuals ranged from whimsical to bizarre Maurice Sendak-type monster images. Hyken has a penchant for tuneful melodies in the Leroy Anderson manner and bright, ear-catching orchestrations. Sans pictures, the score could become a fine addition to the pops repertoire.

MISO music director Eduardo Marturet wrote his own setting of Candy Island, the most optimistic of the children's stories. Employing a more opulent and atmospheric orchestral palette, Marturet's wind, brass and percussion-dominated score mixes heady impressionist languor with festive Latin dance rhythms in a winning manner.

Leading a small ensemble from the first stand, Andai opened the program with a sprightly reading of Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 1. Except for the cello and bassoon, the players stood during the performance. Fast movements were brisk and dance-like, the Adagio more contemplative. Oboes and horns were agile, intonation spot on, and Andai's violin solos were assayed with stylish vigor. The varied and differentiated phrasing of each repetition of the minuet was especially delightful.

Andai captured the sly humor and neo-classical gleam of Prokofiev's Symphony No. 1 (Classical). Silky strings dominated an airy Larghetto, and the Gavotte was both quirky and robust. Fine detailing of inner voices in the adroitly paced Molto vivace finale concluded the program on an exhilarating note, the orchestra in peak form.

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