

Symphony opens season with style

BY DAVID FLESHLER South Florida Classical Review
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Spanish guitarist Ángel Romero

The renowned Spanish guitarist Ángel Romero is an old friend of the Miami Symphony Orchestra, and so it was fitting that he would perform on the first concert of the orchestra's 25th anniversary season.

Romero joined the orchestra Sunday at the Adrienne Arsht Center's Knight Concert Hall for one of his specialties, Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez*. Although he must have lost count how many times he's played this work in public, Romero gave no indication that he found it anything less than delightful.

His absolute command of the instrument allowed him to play with lightness and nuance that seemed just right in Rodrigo's jaunty melodies, tossing off the runs and Spanish-inflected ornaments that decorate the tunes. Under music director Eduardo Marturet, the orchestra made the most of this richly colored score, ingeniously orchestrated to allow the small plucked instrument to shine.

The concert opened with the world premiere of a work by Marturet himself, *Two Readings of Waldo*. Inspired by the work of the artist Waldo Balart, who attended the concert, the work was composed to accompany a video art display of Balart's paintings by Fernando Duprat, boldly geometric abstracts that rely on bright primary colors.

It begins with flute and harp in an ominous dialogue over long held tones in the strings. The tension resolves, only to return. Finally a more lyric passage in the piano leads to a big optimistic theme in the full orchestra. *Two Readings of Waldo* is an absorbing, tension-filled work that clearly reflects the instrumental knowledge of a man who knows his way around the symphony orchestra.

Next came Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5, with soloist Andreas Boyde. Although there was some vague playing in some of the fast passages, Boyde and the orchestra produced a more-than-respectable performance of Beethoven's heroic concerto.

The orchestra really got to show what it can do in the final work, Leonard Bernstein's Symphonic Dances from West Side Story. This arrangement, prepared by the composer, contains some of the most famous tunes from his celebrated Broadway musical.

The orchestra's fine string section gave a lushly evocative performance of "Somewhere." The brass were brilliantly kinetic in the "Cool" section and throughout the final third of the work they delivered an edgy and piercing performance of Bernstein's evocation of gang violence without any sacrifice of technical excellence.