

Symphony performance both powerful and sweet

Pueblo Chieftain, March 11, 2013

by Johanna Woelfel

The Pueblo Symphony offered concertgoers a romantic evening last Saturday with its performance of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2, in C minor, Opus 18, and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5, in E minor, Opus 64, as part of its "Night on Red Square" at Hoag Hall.

The evening's best moments arrived almost immediately as the opening strains of Rachmaninoff's famous piece voiced a rich, Russian coloration intoning folkloric melodies and a welcoming softness.

Guest pianist David Korevaar's deceptively light touches playfully engaged different sections of the orchestra in a manner that suggested a charming conversation. As the individual voices joined together, the robust swelling of the music led to a vibrant piano solo that was both powerful and sweet.

The second and third movements of the symphony built on that success, further engaging from an easy conversation to a waltzing call to dance.

A Juilliard-trained composer and Peter and Helen Weil Professor of Piano at the University of Colorado, Korevaar was a perfect choice as guest for this piece and this orchestra.

As Rachmaninoff, himself a piano virtuoso, designed his work to allow a showcase for his talent; Korevaar made easy use of each movement as an opportunity to entertain with masterful playing. His proximity to Pueblo certainly left many listeners optimistic that he will return to Hoag Hall again.

Guest conductor James P. Liu, music director of the Wuhan Philharmonic Orchestra in China and research scholar with the conducting faculty at Michigan State University College of Music, was both demanding and kinetic as he pushed the orchestra through the rigors of Tchaikovsky's fifth symphony.

Though absent from the dais, Pueblo Symphony Conductor Jacob Chi nonetheless contributed to the evening's success, joining the strings as they tiptoed, marched and strided through the performance.

The Pueblo Symphony is nearing the end of its 84th season, but there is still time to enjoy another performance. Tickets for "Cello by Starlight" featuring Allison Eldredge, April 13 at Hoag Hall, are still available through the PS box office. For more information, visit the symphony's website available via chieftain.com.