

SANTA CRUZ STYLE

Cabrillo Music Festival creates a final weekend to remember

✓ *Cabrillo Music Festival*
Some of classical music's hottest properties appeared in the Cabrillo Music Festival's final week: the Kronos Quartet and Evelyn Glennie, along with the top-flight Festival Orchestra led by Marin Alsop.

Kronos played the Santa Cruz Civic mid-week with a dozen short works written specifically for them. Their incredible accuracy and musicality places them in a league with the world's best chamber performers, and their eclectic repertoire puts them in a class of their own.

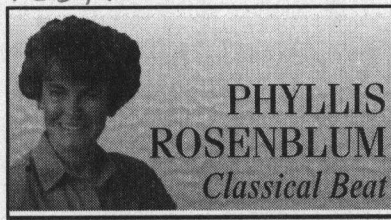
I loved the Kronos arrangement of Revueltas' "Sensamaya." Its original orchestral version has been programmed in the past by both the Festival and the Santa Cruz Symphony.

Other favorites included two of Osvaldo Golijov's arrangements of old Mexican songs; a striking adaptation of "Perfidia" by Stephen Prutsman, who has soloed on piano with the Santa Cruz Symphony, featuring a field recording of a Mexico City street performer; and Carlos Garcia, playing the haunting melody—by blowing on the edge of an ivy leaf!

I first heard Kronos 14 years ago (at the Cabrillo Music Festival). That wonderful program—ethnic, avant-garde, and crossover-pop—was completely without amplification. The group's current enthusiasm for—and reliance on—electronic enhancement and overdubbing adds to the glitz factor, but it sometimes decreases the musical value.

Blazing and amazing

Evelyn Glennie, renowned percussion phenomenon, wowed the Santa Cruz audience in Michael Daugherty's light-hearted but demanding percussion concerto, "UFO." With astounding accuracy and at blazing speed, Glennie reeled off melodious marimba ripples and intricate drumming interspersed with the pings,



clicks, and crashes of myriad instruments and objects.

In the second movement, "Unidentified," Glennie's vibraphone shimmered in a pretty pop-type melody. In the work's fiery finale, Glennie wielded her drum brushes with such energy that one of them flew into pieces, one of which was caught by Alsop in mid-air.

Glennie's slinking-through-the-audience entrance to the eerie amplified warbles of the waterphone added more than necessary glitz—for my taste.

Steve Reich's "The Four Sections" displayed the orchestra's superb musicians in a minimalist-style concerto for orchestra. Melodious at times, the music's repetitions eventually taxed my ears—and I'll bet it was taxing to the players for its place-keeping challenges and its joint-stressing iterations.

Michael Daugherty's "Route 66" was certainly a lively cross-country jaunt as it filled the Civic with high-spirited jazz licks.

Traditionally each year, the cello section plays a program-related prank at the final Civic concert. Last year, fake fish dangled from their bows in honor of Virgil Thomson's "The River." This year, following "Route 66," cellists stood and displayed one-by-one, a series of white-lettered red signs, which read: "Gags like this, though inspired, sooner or later, will get us fired, Burma Shave" (in the familiar loopy script.) I will remember those signs, and have some favorites.

Music at the mission

8-18-02
The Festival finale filled Mission San Juan Bautista with the marvelous music of Michael Daugherty, Thea Musgrave (both in attendance) and John Corigliano.

An oversize orchestra packed itself into the sanctuary for a bright and booming presentation of Daugherty's "Bells for Stokowski." Peeling chimes, soaring solo violin, and luxurious counterpoint provided sonic substance and variety. This tribute to the Philadelphia Orchestra's legendary conductor—and to Bach—ended with pyrotechnics not unlike Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture."

The program's other two works, each scored for partial orchestra, were particularly well suited to the Mission's resonant space. Evelyn Glennie soloed in Musgrave's lushly contemplative "Journey through a Japanese Landscape." This marimba concerto gave distinctive voice to each season-based movement. The marimba, the wind orchestra, and the church's live return were a perfect match, as Glennie, in Asian tunic played with impressive grace and precision.

Corigliano's "Symphony No.2" for string orchestra melded a unified whole from sparse sighs, slashing chords, and lyrical tunes. His devilishly difficult "Fugue" movement, featuring concurrent multiple tempi, was mesmerizing.

Signs of the times

Spotted last Sunday on a silver Mercedes in San Juan Bautista: "4BALLET."

Viewed from a 1959 Chevy on an American highway: "If it's harmony you crave, get a tuba. Burma Shave."

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