

Spotlight

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A Light And Gravity-Defying Evening At Cabrillo Festival

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Dennis Russell Davies and the Festival Orchestra led listeners on a colorful tour of four very different landscapes in sound Friday in the second concert of the Cabrillo Music Festival.

Before a full-house crowd, the orchestra with soloists Wolfgang Schone, baritone, and Romuald Tecco, violin, spanned two centuries and three continents to present visions from Mahler's

Review "Songs of A Wayfarer" to the world premiere of George Barati's "Confluence." The program concluded with two very different musical impressions of Brazil — Darius Milhaud's delightfully comic "Le Boeuf Sur Le Toit" and Heitor Villa-Lobos' stirring and innovative "Choros No. 8."

The program got under way with Barati's work for full orchestra, an intense yet delicate exploration of sound textures, cultural influences and regions of the composer's psyche.

With a wide range of sounds exploiting the orchestra's full percussion section and inclusion of instruments such as the harp and celeste, the work proceeded toward a sense of cultural and internal resolution. The purposefulness of the work's structure left room for delicate solos, with the percussion section seeming to both accompany and punctuate the rest of the orchestra.

Barati, well-known locally for his de-

cade of leadership as music director of the Santa Cruz County Symphony, appeared most pleased with the performance, raising his hands in applause for the audience as the spotlight found him in the audience.

Dynamic German baritone Wolfgang Schone was the evening's first soloist, performing Mahler's 1883 song-cycle "Songs Of A Wayfarer." Once again there was a sense of geography or landscape in the music as the orchestra played the lilting and richly pastorate themes, many of which would reappear in Mahler's First Symphony.

Schone was in superb voice, combining power, sensitivity and layers of emotion in the songs themselves, written out of a terminally ill-fated love by the still youthful but already disturbed composer.

The orchestra contributed rich coloring to the images of nature blossoming in the work as Schone conveyed a rich sense of the artist as troubled protagonist. On one hand was Mahler's genius — his ability to translate nature into song; on the other was his heart, clinging to its romantic wounds as it tried to bolster itself into the role of "Wayfarer."

Romuald Tecco, the orchestra's inimitable concertmaster, put comedy into the spotlight in Milhaud's 1919 "Le Boeuf Sur Le Toit," a giddy comic travelogue inspired by the composer's visit to Brazil.

Although Milhaud envisioned the frothy mix of tangos, maxixes and sambas as potential material for the soundtrack to a Charlie Chaplin film, Tecco brought more of a Peter Sellers Inspector Clouseau interpretation to his playing. As Davies

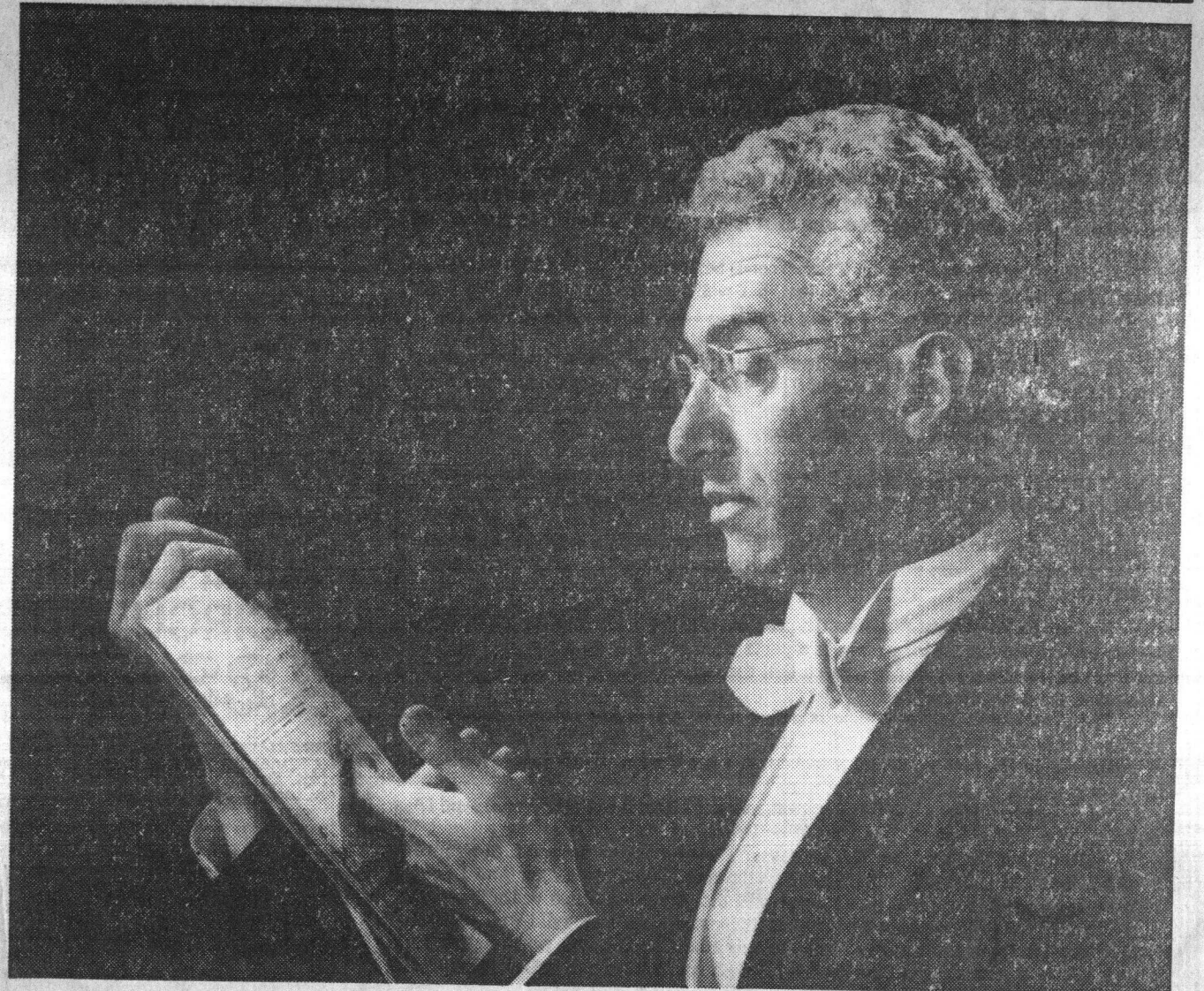
delighted in spurring the orchestra on to the work's intoxicating semi-mindless rhythms, Tecco added an extra level of absurdity, establishing then puncturing a whole array of passionate postures.

Native Brazilian Heitor Villa-Lobos took a very different look at his homeland in his "Choros No. 8," written in 1927. Once again geography was a major inspiration as Villa-Lobos sought to portray forces at work on the land, producing in music a picture of industrialization and modern times arriving in the jungle.

With the tympani underscoring a vital natural undercurrent, the composer drew from a range of new and original devices to build his theme. Snare drums accentuated the forces of modernism, conflicting with Villa-Lobos' obviously deeply-held love for the land itself.

Under Davies' unfaltering baton, the panoramic, highly original work continued, the excitement mounting, right up to an incredible climax which left the audience in rapt silence for several moments before the cheers began.

All of the evening's principals — Davies, Schone, Tecco and Barati — received bouquets of balloons for their exquisite efforts. Members of the audience, too, were given balloons on their way out of the theater as souvenirs of the evening's light, gravity-defying program.



The Cabrillo Music Festival played the world premiere of George Barati's "Confluence" Friday.