

Symphony shines in evening celebrating Spanish style

By W. GERALD COCHRAN
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The Salisbury Symphony Orchestra, under the musical direction of Conductor David Hagy, gave the final concert of its 2003-2004 season on May 1 in Keppel Auditorium with a program titled "An Evening en Español." The concert featured works in the Spanish style, although only one composer on the program, Manuel de Falla, was actually from Spain. His Suite No. 2, from the ballet "The Three-Cornered Hat," was the opening number. Consisting of three dances, it set the stage and tone for the entire concert, and was played with great zeal by the orchestra.

The Concerto No. 1 for

Guitar and Orchestra by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, who was born in Italy and died in the United States, featured Patrick Lui as soloist. Luis is coordinator of guitar studies at Catawba College. His playing demonstrated not only virtuosity, but also a lyric beauty and silky smoothness that I have only rarely heard in other guitarists. He is an artist that this community should treasure, and, I hope, will hear more of.

The first half of the program closed with "Capriccio Espagnol" by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. It is a Russian composer's impression of the music of Spain. This work truly demonstrated the great talent of our orchestra and its principal players, many of whom had

solos. Most notable were the violin solos of Concertmaster Dan Skidmore, who showed great virtuosity in his long solo passages. The orchestra and Maestro Hagy are to be congratulated on their fine performance of this piece.

The second half of the program was in a lighter vein, starting with selections from "Man of La Mancha," a Broadway hit from the 1960s. Much of this music was familiar to the audience, which found the performance quite satisfying.

"Viva La Vida Salsa" followed. It celebrates Latin popular songs that have emerged since the '60s, and features works by Dizzy Gillespie, Carlos Santana, Osvaldo Farres and others. All six sections of the work have

lively Latin beats, and were played with great gusto by the orchestra.

Maurice Ravel's (a Frenchman) "Bolero" closed the program. Although the composer was not fond of this work, it is a favorite with audiences. Again, many of the woodwinds and brass principal players were featured as soloists. Underlying all the themes and solos is the rhythmic beat of the snare drum, playing the same sequence over 500 times without change.

Principal percussionist Mike Austin carried out this demanding part with great aplomb. He, as well as the other soloists, and the entire orchestra, are to be congratulated on their fine performance of this demanding, al-

though, for them, sometimes repetitious and boring, work.

With every concert of the Salisbury Symphony I attend, I am continually amazed and impressed with the great talent of the ensemble and of music director Hagy. Each performance seems to outdo the last, and I do not anticipate this will change any time soon. This community is proud to have a musical organization of such high caliber. The 2004-2005 season, a "Season of Connections," promises to be every bit as exciting as this season, and is not to be missed.

Congratulations, Salisbury Symphony, for a job well done, and for enriching the life and soul of this community.