

SEARCH BLOG || FLAG BLOG | Next Blog»

Create Blog | Sign In



THURSDAY, MAY 3, 2007

Musica Angelica weaves a virtuoso tapestry



Angelic

Review of concert April 29, 2007
All Saints Church, Beverly Hills

Rodney Punt, Arts and Culture Critic

Before the refined era of *Sense and Sensibility*, there was a more ribald one; let's call it *Self and Sensuality*. For their last concert of the season, our intrepid historic period orchestra, **Musica Angelica**, just home from sacred-music touring in Europe, let their wigs down in a decidedly giddy romp through High Baroque works that gilded every artistic lily with secular extravagance, leaving sacred introspection on the road. Two bona-fide Baroque virtuosos, Soprano **Céline Ricci** and Harpsichordist-Conductor **Jory Vinikour**, joined the band in a program titled "Virtuoso Tapestry" with works by three culminating masters of the era, **George Frederic Handel**, **Johann Sebastian Bach** and **Jean-Philippe Rameau**.

Young Ricci comes to Los Angeles with an impressive array of first-tier

WHO AND WHAT'S HERE?

- [Rodney Punt](#)
- [Tod Mesirov](#)
- [Joseph Mailander](#)
- [classical music reviews](#)
- [art photography reviews](#)
- [museum show reviews](#)
- [theater reviews](#)
- [film reviews](#)

BLOG ARCHIVE

- [May 2007 \(2\)](#)
- [April 2007 \(3\)](#)
- [March 2007 \(4\)](#)
- [February 2007 \(3\)](#)
- [December 2006 \(2\)](#)
- [October 2006 \(1\)](#)
- [May 2006 \(1\)](#)
- [January 2006 \(1\)](#)
- [December 2005 \(1\)](#)
- [October 2005 \(1\)](#)
- [August 2005 \(1\)](#)

ABOUT ME

[VIEW MY COMPLETE PROFILE](#)



engagements already behind her, the local anticipation worth the wait. Of petite and willowy frame, dark curls and winsome smile, she shined in a series of showy soprano arias from operas of Handel and Rameau. Her voice spectrum varies from light amber to bright silver and is well-focused if not large in size. Possessing a stunning technique, she sings - in vibrato-less Baroque style - every roulade, trill, and heroic ascent free of constriction and with perfect intonation. One might be inclined to forget content with a delivery system like Ricci's. Fortunately we didn't need to choose.

Cleopatra's two final arias from Handel's *Giulio Cesare*, "Paingero" and "Da Tempeste," provided Ricci a full range of emotional transformation from despair to triumphant joy. Two more from the self-celebratory operatic oratorio, *Semele*, "Myself I shall adore" and "No, no I'll take no less" (the latter rhyming with "Than all in full excess!") are confessions of unashamed Baroque exhibitionism. The "excess" could well refer to the amount of notes in any one of the arias. Ricci at times impersonated a vocal ventriloquist, her lips still but passages peeling as rapidly as a keyboard's. Two instrumental movements of Handel by the orchestra complimented her vocal numbers in this set.

Perhaps the most interesting musical fare of the afternoon was the selection of Rameau excerpts, instrumental and vocal. Long the most neglected of the three featured composers, Rameau is enjoying a justly-deserved revival. Like so many French composers to follow, he was as much interested in orchestral color as formal statement, and the featured excerpts were particularly satisfying and revelatory. Ricci again soared (with musical laughs, among other vocal novelties) in the recitative "Formons les plus brillant concerts" ("Let us create the most beautiful concerts") and the aria "Amour, lance tes traits" ("Love, shoot your arrows") from Rameau's *Platée*. The former could have served as Rameau's mission statement (...the latter, perhaps as mankind's?) Two additional instrumental numbers of Rameau featured the mellow coloring of the orchestra's wooden flutes and the crisp freshness of its plucked strings.

Sandwiched between the two vocal groupings was Bach's *Concerto in d minor*, BWV 1052, providing the main vehicle for harpsichord soloist Vinikour, who also conducted. A native of Chicago with a career mostly pursued in Europe, he's a digital dazzler fully on par with Ricci's vocal wizardry. Vinikour's Bach was suave and propulsive, with a particularly pleasing delivery of the aria-like Adagio. Some - this reviewer among them - might have preferred additional sound-reinforcement for the light-timbered harpsichord, whose passages were lost in full ensemble playing, and whose solos in this "Virtuoso

Tapestry” seemed a musical fabric pre-softened by Downy.

Throughout the concert, Vinikour, as conductor, led the crack Musical Angelica band with efficiency, charm and verve, infusing his duties with an optimistic bonhomie fully in sync with the extroverted nature of the High Baroque era at its most self-assured.

The afternoon closed with a derivative potpourri encore by Handel’s younger contemporary and sometimes protégé, **William Babell**, whose showpiece for soprano and harpsichord, based on Handel’s wildly popular early opera, Rinaldo, provided the best opportunity for something of an equal-footing duet for the two soloists.

Stay tuned for October when Musica Angelica kicks off its new season, and regular conductor **Martin Haselböck** returns with guest artists for more thrills and chills.

POSTED BY JOSEPH MAILANDER AT 8:50 AM

LABELS: [CLASSICAL](#), [RODNEY](#)

o COMMENTS:

[Post a Comment](#)

[Newer Post](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)