

Last Saturday Penticton was treated to a Centennial Celebration at the Cleland Theatre. In a fabulous, sold out concert the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra showcased local talent. There were numerous standing ovations for the outstanding achievements of vocalists Jenavieve Moore and John David Jasper, pianist Stephen Philcox, and composer Ernst Schneider.

The evening began with a world premiere of Penticton composer Ernst Schneider's composition "Celebration and Reflection". It was a parade of contrasting themes which beautifully brought out the orchestral colours. Bustling rhythmical themes were arranged in rich textures while lyrical passages had more transparent instrumentation. There was a haunting nostalgic line on solo Cello and some archaic sounding unison passages. The piece came to an end with triumphant marching band sounds.

Then Jenavieve Moore appeared on stage in a festive sparkly night-blue gown. Her youthful elegant soprano voice blended beautifully with John David Jasper's powerful baritone as they performed the duet "La ci darem la mano" from Mozart's opera Don Giovanni.

In the rustic aria "Deh! Vieni alla finestra" John David Jasper was accompanied on a mandolin by concert master Denis Letourneau.

Jenavieve Moore's performance in Mozart's "Laudamus te" from Mass in C was remarkable. She masterfully executed the coloraturas and trills; it was pure joy to listen to.

The precious Steinway grand piano from the former Penticton High School Auditorium now found a new home at the Cleland Theatre, which is fortunate for pianists performing here. Stephen Philcox made it shine in his interpretation of Mozart's Concerto for Piano in C. His experience as a conductor was noticeable as he always found the necessary dynamic level to interact with the orchestra. In the slow movement his expressive playing seemed to show a glimpse of Mozart's psyche.

After the intermission we were treated to Mozart's lively and cheerful Symphony in D major, followed by some charming arias the Magic Flute. My favourite was when John David Jasper impersonated the bird catcher Papageno, looking for prey in imaginary trees and playing on the pan flute. His German diction was excellent. Jenavieve Moore joined in for the endearing Pa-pa-pa-pa duet in which the couple declares love and commitment to each other.

For a suitable finale Summerland's Mosaic Choir joined the orchestra in Mozart's reflective motet "Ave Verum Corpus" and in the jubilant "Regina Coeli". To finish off the Centennial Celebration in style conductor Rosemary Thompson invited the audience to join in on singing Happy Birthday to Penticton and to share a piece of cake in the lobby.