

Benjamin Hochman

OTTAWA CITIZEN

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ARTS

CONCERT REVIEW

A pleasant evening of baroque for the romantically inclined

BY RICHARD TODD

We are so accustomed to hearing authentic, or at least historically informed, performances of baroque music that it is refreshing to hear it played in the romantically informed manner of the middle of the last century.

One might not like it quite as well, but as long as a performance is consistent with its own style and goals it will have something to offer everyone.

This is particularly true of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, one of today's most popular works from the baroque era. It has survived more radical liberties than conductor Pinchas Zukerman brought to it last night in the last of the National Arts Centre Orchestra's summer concerts or, for that matter, Zukerman's recent CBC recording with the NACO.

The recording features Zukerman as the soloist and conductor and it has become justly popular, at least in Canada.

He only conducted last night, ceding the solo honours to NACO violinists

Donnie Deacon who played the *Spring* and *Summer* concertos, and Jessica Linnebach who played *Autumn* and *Winter*. It was a good opportunity to hear these eminently talented musicians, and they acquitted themselves well.

Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 5* made up the second half of last night's short program.

Its string section, the *ripieno*, consisted of 18 or so players, and that's a bit large for this repertoire.

Or at least it would be if a harpsichord were part of the small group of soloists, or *concertino*. Instead, flutist Joanna G'froerer and violinist Zukerman were joined by pianist Benjamin Hochman whose playing was focused on the needs of the piece and avoided any kind of ostentation, even in the brilliant keyboard cadenza near the end of the first movement.

It was a pleasant hour or so of music, made more agreeable by its 7:30 start time. There was still some light in the sky as the audience left Southam Hall.



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