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DUO TURGEON DANCES ACROSS LATIN AMERICA ON 2 PIANOS



Photo:

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ARTICLE RATING

For decades Miami has been an oasis for the classical piano persuasion. Organizations like the Chopin Foundation of the United States, the Miami International Piano Festival, and the Dranoff International 2 Piano Foundation keep scratching our keyboard itch year round.

There may not be a more versatile and thorough musical instrument than the piano, capable of delicate lyricism and explosive percussiveness with infinite sound shades in between. Thus, one piano is a universe. What then, results of two pianos?

“One of the big challenges for duo piano is to prevent it from sounding like two pianists playing *fortissimo* all the time,” duo pianist Edward Turgeon says in a post-concert interview. “We try not to do that.”

Edward and his wife Anne-Louise form the Duo Turgeon, a two piano team that has seen the world playing side by side for 30 years. On February 21 they performed an all-Latin American program at the New World Center in Miami Beach, presented by the Dranoff Foundation. It included works by Piazzolla, Hahn, Mignone, Ponce, Lecuona, Valera, Carreño, and Guastavino.

“If only I were from Latin America,” Anne Turgeon says. “It’s such an amazing culture, I just love it so much.”

That love came gushing out from every work they played. Their fingers are excellent dancers and showed great flair, but also tenderness. Their seduction was irresistible, starting with a lush arrangement of Piazzolla's *La muerte del ángel*. The sound was penetrating, the rhythm was sexy, almost dangerous.

The Turgeons look like the couple that live next door. They are comfortable and easy going, and talked to the audience about the pieces as they performed them. No matter how fiery the piece, they never lost control. Communicating with a smile, a wink, or a head tilt, they never missed an opportunity to make googly eyes to each other.

"There was a spark from the beginning," Anne says, speaking in romantic and professional terms. "It's been an extraordinary learning experience, to be able to let go and listen to what Ed is doing, and you have to do that in a partnership, and a marriage. You have to give and take."

Nowhere was that more apparent than in *Valsa de Esquina* and *Valsa Choro* by Brazilian composer Francisco Mignone. The intimacy and playfulness achieved by Duo Turgeon in those musical gems was delicious.

The main course of the evening was *Migrant Voyage* by Latin jazz Grammy nominee Manuel Valera. The work is this year's "Bacardi Choice," and was commissioned by the Dranoff Foundation in conjunction with Bacardi USA.

"The title of the piece really fit his experience," Anne explains. "Being a Cuban immigrant, everything rested with his own life experience, and that's the best way to express yourself, to write your own life's story. I think that really came across in elements in the piece."

Valera's work is dark, with a lot of water in the sound. It begins softly but severe, and builds into a massive tidal wave of complex rhythms and thick harmonic texture. A Bach toccata came to mind.

"It's unsettled," Edward says. "It creates the image of thinking: Where am I going? What am I doing? How can I possibly be in this situation?"

A different hue of passion was provided by Guastavino's *Tres Romances Argentinos*, where in three episodes the composer summarizes his country's people, landscape, and thirst for dance. Guastavino sheet music is difficult to find outside of Argentina, but Edward came across this particular work at the Library of Congress.

"You never know what you're going to find in the Library of Congress," he boasted from the stage. In our interview, he quoted an acquaintance as describing Guastavino's work as "Schumann with tequila poured over it." Definitely the finest, smoothest but highly intoxicating tequila, that is.

Duo Turgeon's artistry is honest. There wasn't a note in the performance that didn't come from their souls, from the first steps of Piazzolla to the last drum beats of their encore, Milhaud's *Brasileira* from his Scaramouche Suite. They must never take their dancing shoes off.

ABOUT THE WRITER



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Fernando Landeros is a pianist who has performed throughout Mexico, the United States, Australia, Germany, and Austria. A native of San Diego, his..

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