

Duo Turgeon brings fluent flair to Latin program

By Lawrence Budmen



Duo Turgeon performed Sunday at New World Center.

Anne Louise and Edward Turgeon, gold medal winners of the 1997 Dranoff Two Piano Competition performed a recital of works by Latin American composers at Miami Beach's New World Center. The event was part of the Dranoff concert series which features duo piano rarities in programs by competition laureates.

Throughout the evening, Duo Turgeon played with accuracy and idiomatic fluency. What this type of prettily gauged performance lacked was the excitement and brilliance that the most distinguished two piano teams—and the best Dranoff winners—bring to their music making. The Turgeons fared best in scores that were either originally conceived for two pianos or transcribed by the original composers. They were less effective in arrangements of pieces created for other instruments.

In Pablo Ziegler's transcription of Astor Piazzolla's *La muerte de angel*, the players captured the edgy modernist rhythms but their touch was too hard. The beautiful melody of the central episode emerged schmaltzy rather than sensual. Somehow they seemed to overlook that this was a tango, even if it was meant for the concert hall rather than dancing.

Venezuelan-born Reynaldo Hahn spent much of his career in Paris and the French influence was clearly evident in his *Le ruban dénoué* (The Untied Ribbon). The three-movement suite includes a

waltz that could have been written by Ravel as well as touches of Latinized Fauré. The Turgeon duo brought an appropriate whiff of Gallic perfume to a performance that needed a little more dash and verve.

Scenas Infantis by Octavio Pinto, in the original solo version, is a familiar work for piano students. The composer's own transcription was given a crisp reading. Pinto added some witty dissonance to the final march which is more effective in the duo version.

Two unpublished waltzes by Brazil's Francisco Mignone were obtained by the Turgeons from the composer's widow. These vignettes are ruminative and nostalgic and would make a fine musical backdrop for a ballet. Mignone's waltzes brought out the best in the players who infused the scores with lightness and an aristocratic touch. The blending and perfect timing of the melody on one keyboard with accompanying figures on the other was a particular delight.

Edward Turgeon found Manuel Ponce's *Idilio Mexicano*, the composer's only two piano work, in the Library of Congress. A deft touch and finely varied dynamics highlighted Ponce's typical interplay of catchy melodies and arpeggiated pyrotechnics. Enrico Cabiati and Mario Carta's transcription of Ernesto Lecuona's Córdoba was overly rhapsodic, missing the inspired simplicity of the original. Grace Helen Nash's splashy arrangement of the familiar *Malagueña* needed greater sweep and imagination than the Turgeons' efficient traversal offered.

The premiere of *Migrant Voyage* by jazz pianist and band leader Manuel Valera, a Dranoff commission, proved a winning crossover effort. The composer dedicated the work "to the immigrant struggle in the United States and to those lives lost in the Florida Straits in search of a better life." Taken on its own terms, the score mixes romantic melodies with authentic Latin jazz, with melodic lines both complex and appealing. Duo Turgeon gave the engaging work a fine launch, with a fine rendering of the jazzy riffs and musical twists.

Un rêve en mer by famed Venezuelan pianist Teresa Carreño came right out of the romantic tradition, highly Chopinesque in spirit and melodic progression. Playing their own outstanding arrangement of this authentic keyboard piece, the Turgeons gave their finest performance of the evening. Carlos Guastavino's *Tres Romances Argentinos* were tuneful miniatures, beautifully conceived for two pianos. s *Brazileira* from the *Scaramouche* suite by Darius Milhaud , the encore, closed the program on a lively note.

The Dranoff 2 Piano concert series continues 8 p.m. March 22 at Coral Gables Congregational Church with Duo d'Accord playing works by Bach, Mozart, Liszt, Prokofiev and Richard Rodney Bennett. dranoff2piano.org. 305-572-9900

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