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The Illinois Valley Symphony Orchestra (IVSO) concert was held at the Ottawa Township High school on a very beautiful Sunday afternoon on March 11, 2018. This was the first ever musical orchestra that I have attended and because of this, I didn't really know if it was something that I would methodically enjoy or if it was going to feel like an eternity. I had also met up with a few of my classmates that were also attending the Orchestra and that brought me to feel like I fit in with this specific audience. To my surprise when I stepped in the room I immediately felt like I was in the presence of a very passionate and entertaining group of people to which made me feel very comfortable. After a few brief announcements the room was overtaken by darkness and the first introduction piece began to play.

The introduction piece was called "Meditation on the Old Bohemian Choral" and as soon as I heard the beautiful sounds of the violins clashing perfectly with all the other instruments I realized that this was going to be a very pleasant concert. As far as instrumentation goes, I immediately noticed a wide variety of instruments such as a few violins, violas, cellos, a double bass, tubas, a clarinet, an English horn, an oboe, a bassoon, a harp and some flutes and even a timpani. When the introduction piece was playing I noticed that the tempo of the piece was rather slow to which solemnly surprised me because when I thought about a full orchestra I imagined a very intense sounding concert. After a few seconds of the music progressing I noticed the rhythm was pretty much steady throughout. What I liked most of the introduction piece is the fact that it wasn't a very dull slow sounding piece throughout; the piece went from very low dynamics and pitches to very high and intense dynamics which brought out a very great balance of sounds that pleased my ears. As far as the harmony goes for this first introduction piece I would not say that the harmony was complex in any way since it was very easy to distinguish the harmony from all the other elements of music that was going on.

Awaiting what was to come next, the composer, Lucia Matos introduced a girl by the name of Aubrey Garretson (junior division winner). My first impression was that she looked so young and it was amazing to see such a young person taking that much responsibility and be so talented. She played a piece named “Papillon” and as soon as she began playing the flute I was instantly drawn in and listening to the beautiful sounds she was producing. As far as the tempo is concerned, I would say the tempo of her piece was rather medium paced but the sound/melody that was being produced can be described as easy to follow because I never found myself getting lost trying to figure out the melody or the deciphering the steady tempo of the piece. On the other had the dynamics of this instrument were very soft and slow but not too slow to where it sounded dull. Although the musicianship was very artsy and expressive because both performers expressed themselves and their talents. Because of the nature of the music I started painting a rather cartoony picture in my head as the song progressed.

After a brief intermission, which I found to be a very productive and helpful way to regroup myself and mentally prepare for the next piece of music I sat back down, and the room filled with darkness again. The next part of the ensemble was after Aubrey and it was another solo piece played by Jessica Znaniecki. Jessica is a very talented musical performer with a much fulfilled background in musical competitions (senior division winner). This solo piece was arguably my favorite part of the ensemble for several reasons and the name of this piece was “Hypnosis” which was a well suited name compared to what it sounded like. For one, the instrumentation of this piece was only that of a flute and her physical ability to produce enough air to keep the sounds coming so smoothly and evenly paced. The melody was a more relaxed one compared to the music that was preformed up until now. I even found myself getting lost in my own thoughts during this part of the performance because of how powerful the music was.

While she was performing I feel like the background instruments complimented her harmony and tempo very well and did a respectable job keeping a nice and steady rhythm. The texture could be described as more monophonic/ polyphonic considering there was only one instrument but still being able to produce a very powerful delivery was something that we could all appreciate. The part that I really enjoyed of her solo piece was the ending of her performance because of the beautiful drastic changes in pitch and evenly spaced notes that made it an easy change to comprehend while enjoying at the same time. After the two solo pieces ended, the two girls were congratulated and what I think was the main part of the ensemble began.

The final piece of music could most accurately be described as a classical piece of music with a slight twist because the intense changes throughout the piece almost gave me the impression of a baroque sounding concert. The four final pieces were in four parts that more or less sounded similar to me because of the soft low pitches and drastic intense changes. It was broken up into pieces named “Allegro con brio”, “Adagio”, “Allegretto grazioso-Molto Vivace”, and finally “Allegro ma non troppo”. The ensemble as a whole did a very good job because throughout the entire performance they all managed to keep a very balanced rhythm and musical cohesion. It really felt like all the different instruments were on the same page and remained unified through the entire ensemble as well. The tempo of the final piece changed from soft and slow dynamics and pitches to very high and intense pitches but still managed to keep me from getting lost. I think the reason that I liked this piece so much was because it was rhythmically easy to follow, and I never found myself frustrated trying to distinguish the melody from the harmony or the texture. The melody could be described as a very strict paced part of the music because the melody was even throughout. The Dynamics of the final piece were very much slow and fast and had a lot of highs and lows as the music progressed. I think that the theme of the

music was ABACA sounding and had the recurring A which really complemented the harmony and rhythm which allowed the beat to have the same effect over and over. With its repetitive nature, the homophonic nature was still complimented very nicely. The instrumentation part of the ensemble had it all as far as strings, woodwinds, brass and percussion instruments. It went from a minor key to a major key and kept switching back and forth which provided a good experience in terms of musical listening and really being able to distinguish the different elements that were going on within the music. Overall, I really enjoyed the performance and considering I wasn't even sure if I would like attending a concert like this, I am glad that I decided to attend this specific ensemble because I loved it and I really feel like I have expanded my musical taste.

In conclusion, the composer Lucia Matos was outstanding. Seeing the way she controlled every piece of the music was amazing and made me wonder how important she is carrying out the ensemble. Would the performance be the same without a conductor? What brought me to really like the IVSO is knowing its purpose and what its aim is. The IVSO just wants to entertain and inspire the community with their performances and I think that is an effective way to inspire people of our community. It also is giving young musical talents a chance to reach their potential by holding competitions and giving them a chance to actually be a part of the IVSO. I support the vision that the IVSO has and I will continue to support them by spreading the word and even trying to attend more concerts held.