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On Sunday, September 21, 2014 the Illinois Valley Symphony Orchestra (IVSO) presented a “Pops Concert” in the Princeton High School Auditorium. The IVSO is conducted by Lucia Matos and this concert featured Kate Tombaugh, a mezzo-soprano soloist from Streator, Illinois. Star Spangled Banner: To open the concert the orchestra played a traditional arrangement of our national anthem. The melody was most prominent in the trumpet and string sections with harmony provided by the horn section. The percussion section lent support with the commonly used accompaniment of a beginning snare drum roll played throughout, bass drum hits and cymbal crashes. At the end of the second to last phrase, for the held out note for the word “free,” a trumpet took the pitch up an octave, which is an optional embellishment for the piece and always a crowd favorite. This arrangement of the piece was also a great introduction for the concert because it was easy for the crowd to sing along with the orchestra.

Cinderella March from *Cinderella*: This piece was composed for television and was a cute, upbeat start of the concert repertoire. Following the introduction of the piece there was a call and response between oboe and flute, and the song appeared to be in some sort of rondo (ABACA) form. The reoccurring “A” theme was a bouncy melody and there was a well-played clarinet solo in section C.

Overture to *The Merry Widow*: *The Merry Widow* was described to the audience as the “most famous” work of Franz Lehár. Following the introduction there was a descending transition line which featured a ritardando. The first melody featured vibrato from the string section.

Prominent moments in this piece were a trumpet fanfare section, a flute solo and a short oboe solo. The horn section had supporting lines throughout.

Seguedille from *Carmen*: This was the first song in the concert featuring Kate Tombaugh. The introduction featured a flute playing a short line and then repeating it an octave lower. As Kate

started singing the Orchestra began their role of simple background accompaniment for her fantastic voice. The song was in triple meter and this was out-lined by the Cellos playing on the downbeat of each measure and the violins playing on beats 2 and 3. The orchestra and Kate showed advanced musicianship as they kept their sounds balanced, and the orchestra followed Kate's dynamic contrasts. As the song neared its end it started crescendoing and the flute re-entered. The grand finale was an ascending, crescendoing vocal line.

Habañera from *Carmen*: The cellos start this song playing their four note ostinato. Kate's vocal melody comes in as a descending, smooth line. This continues throughout, with short, loud interruptions from the orchestra. The abrupt entrances give the song vibrant dynamic contrasts. The song ended with a very impressive, long vibrato note held by Kate followed by two beats by the orchestra.

Ah! quel dîner! from *La Périchole*: This humorous song was an audience favorite and gave Kate a chance to showcase her acting talent. After Kate's hiccup and "Shh!" the orchestra held a caesura in order to create a dramatic effect in the moment. The song is in triple meter and the beats are again outlined by the cello on 1 and the violins on beats 2 and 3. Kate's stage presence and use of her simple prop were incredible and made this very enjoyable to watch and listen to.

Hungarian Dances Nos. 1, 3 and 5: These were based mostly on gypsy themes. The violin is strong in Gypsy cultures and throughout these three dances I noticed a lot of focus on the violin, flute and horn sections. The first dance was in duple meter and included a melody shared by the violins and horns that sounded great together. The second dance included an oboe solo with horn countermelody and string section accompaniment. It then went into another violin and horn shared melody. The third dance featured a lot of sudden dynamic and tempo contrast. There was a section in the middle of the piece which was also contrasting, switching between a slow

quadruple meter and a fast duple meter.

That's a Plenty: This piece featured many of the traditional characteristics of a jazz chart such as a walking bass and a typical jazz trombone countermelody. Because this was arranged for an orchestra there were many aspects that one might not expect to hear, such as the violins trading melody with the trombones and the tympani in the rhythm section. The end of the piece was polyphonic as the flutes, trumpets and trombones each had separate melodies, which eventually came together at the end with focus placed on the violin and a traditional Dixieland ending.

Highlights from Showboat: Because this piece was a medley of tunes with contrasting styles, it really spotlighted how well the orchestra responded to the conductor as she manipulated the style and the push/pull of the tempo. It also was a good piece to recognize changing tone colors because the trumpets used mutes part of the time, the orchestra added a keyboard to the sound, and in certain spots the snare drum really pierced through the sound.

Music from *Frozen*: This modern piece had a variety of characteristics that made it stand out from the rest of the concert. The musicians utilized the sound of foot stomps, sleigh bells and different keyboard settings to recreate the soundtrack of the movie as closely as they could.

There were some notable modulations from major to minor keys that helped convey the changing style of emotion the music represented. The medley featured several instrumental solos and brilliant brass section sounds, along with a driving drum set rhythm throughout.

Send in the Clowns from *A Little Night Music*: This was a string section feature where each section seemed to have its own steady role throughout. The violins and violas played the melody while the cellos had short responses during the long notes at in the melody. The double bass provided the important low support and harmony for the piece.

The Sound of Music: Kate was eagerly welcomed back to the stage to delight the audience with a

few more vocal pieces. This arrangement of the piece featured some word coloring as the flutes threw in little “chirps” of sound as the lyrics mentioned birds. The percussion was simple and steady throughout with a bass drum and a snare drum, and the piece concluded with a muted trumpet, horn, and trombone sustained note.

It's a Grand Night for Singing from *State Fair*: This piece was very similar to the previous piece in style and was only slightly faster and brighter. The melody is an octave jump which then works its way down toward the initial note. It ended very quickly and unexpectedly with a drawn out vocal tone. The Orchestra and Kate played this as a second encore and the audience was sure to leave the concert humming along to the catchy melody.

I can be a Sexy Lady: Kate's first encore was a satirical song about the struggles of being a mezzo-soprano. Kate sang it with keyboard accompaniment by Anne Badger. The piano accompaniment changed from part to part depending on the lyrics and the way Kate was singing them, but much of it was short, choppy piano chords. There were several intentional pauses which made the audience anxious that something went wrong, but they then realized that this was the way it was intended. It was leaving room for another humorous interjection from Kate!