

Canadian Brass

The Community Concert Association scored yet another hit on Wednesday night with Canadian Brass in concert. I have heard this group several times before, shortly after their formation, and knew it would be a hit. I was not disappointed.

To quote from their publicity material – “Five tremendous musicians – each a virtuoso in his own right, form the legendary Canadian Brass, having earned the distinction of ‘the world’s most famous brass group’”. I couldn’t agree more. From the first note they played until the last note, they were utterly captivating. Their superb virtuosity alone is wonderful to hear, but coupled with their witty repartee and hijinks, they make an incredible evening of entertainment.

The two trumpets, french horn, trombone and tuba combine with a complete blend of sound, each player knowing when to be louder or softer, providing an altogether marvelous blend. Each player was impeccably crisp and clear in every style, from slow to incredibly demanding. To my ear, their playing was as perfect as any human could make it.

They presented many genres: renaissance, baroque, classical, romantic, jazz, dixieland and opera to name a few. They were equally at home in all of them, keeping the style intact throughout. In short, they were spectacular.

Although their program was full of fun and many laughs, they took the music seriously, giving proper respect to each selection. Their attention to dynamics, their sensitive phrasing and engaging stage presence was incredible.

As always, in a program of such quality, it is hard to pick a “best”, but in this case, I would have to choose their closing set, a Carmen Suite which brought their playful antics to the fore. It was incredibly amusing and full of laughs, as they donned various head gear to depict a character. Even with this extremely light hearted approach, they maintained their musical integrity, and brought us to our feet with enthusiastic applause, leading to an encore, which was the incredibly demanding “Flight of the Bumble Bee” showcasing once again their superb ability and sending us home with a sense of awe at what we had heard.

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Marvin Dickau is an Organist, Pianist and Conductor who has an A.Mus. from the University of Alberta. He has conducted choirs and small orchestras, given solo piano and organ recitals and accompanied many singers and instrumentalists in Kelowna and Calgary. He is currently Minister of Music at First United Church and Executive Director of the Kelowna Kiwanis Music Festival.