Jeffery Morse

Trio 7 paper

This is a paper on the trio 7 classical concert.

The ‘Trio Seven’ are three guitarists that play music from barouche to post modern eras, including movie themes. They all play on very unique guitars in that they are modified classical guitars that have an extra low string. Unlike most guitars with a low “b” string this one has other modifications that make these guitars unique. One they have added frets on both the low string and the high ‘e’ and ‘b’ strings. These added modifications allow these guitars to play lower than a normal 7 string guitar, and higher as well. The architect of this design set out to create and instrument that in which he would be able to play orchestral pieces. This is impossible for the six string guitar to do because there just isn’t enough range to play them. Even on typical 7 string guitars this would be difficult, however with the addition of the lower and upper shelves in tandem with there being a trio of musicians the wide world of orchestral, and even movie themes are possible. On a performance note all three musicians are classically trained guitarists, with a love for the ‘7’ string cause. The members of the band tonight are Matthew Grasso, Harry Stoddard, and Matthew Foley.

Song one, “Largetto fo Les cinq doigts” composed by Stravinsky originally for piano, and transcribed for guitar by Matthew Grasso. The song seems very slow and melodic. Further was performed so well that it sounded very simple, although I know that’s not the case. In the Second part of the this song they began to play ‘Agua e Vinho’ by Gismonti, and transcribed for guitar by Grasso. This piece had a fast flamingo feel. I really enjoyed it. The next song they played was ‘Air ‘ from Orchestral Suite no. 3 by Bach, and Transcribe by Matthew Foley. I recognized it right away, and really like this song. I’ve heard it in so many movies. At points this transcription reminds me of counter point, counter point for guitar that is. This was a very nice piece despite the small errors. Next was a piece by Rachmaninov, a prelude in C minor, and transcribed by Grasso. Grasso noted that this composer had a very large hand berth which made his music near to impossible to play for most musicians. Also I had also noticed that Grasso was not only playing but conducting with his head, and a loud breath at important parts of the arrangements that required fractional prep. The piece seemed monophonic to me, two guitars strumming in unison for a part of it, along with the third guitar playing a bass line. The next song was a movie theme. We were supposed to guess it. The conductor/musician Grasso gave these hints: It was man dint he 60’s, was remade in the last five years, and was about the search for a boy who was pure of heart with no greed. It was performed very pretty and I recognized it but couldn’t place it, it turned out to be a theme song to ‘Charlie and the Chocolate Factory’, ‘Pure Imagination’. The song was transcribed by a friend they said; one Phillip Miller. Song number five was ‘The Sunken Cathedral’ by Debussy; the transcribe author is offered. At first I thought this song to sound odd, like a piano ought to be playing it, since it was originally composed for piano this made sense to me. The ‘sunken’ part was very legato, and melodic. There were often dissonances, as the three took turns playing the melody parts, which we might as well call ‘lead’ since they are guitars. Also this piece had a lot of Bass Repetition, or ostinato. This brings us to movie theme two, this one transcribed by Foley. The hints are: made in the 1970’s, and is about the psychological effects on soldiers in Vietnam. Started out with a melody, supported by a strumming guitar. One a bass line was introduced it mirrored the melody most of the time with the strumming remained to be the foundation. Then they started switching parts, however, when they would switch they would switch up the song as well. The parts would change from a bass and melody mirror with strumming guitar to melody in alto and soprano being mirrored and harmonic with a bass line, they traded parts off and on changing up the music in this way several times. It sort of reminded me of the group ‘Boston’ who mastered this technique in rock –n- roll in the 70’s. the song I didn’t know but turned out to be a theme from the movie deer hunter. The last song before the intermission was Yiddish-ish, an original composition by Grasso. It seemed to be based on Chord melodies with lots of improvisation. It had mostly a the classic Yiddish sound, however, in sections the character changed to an almost Punjabi type of music. So it sounded to be like a hybrid, Yiddish meets Punjab meets western music. The melodies and leads were big on the slides, and the leads were played as fast and accurate as any rock shredder I’ve ever heard. The bass line was ostinato while the soprano and Alto seemed all improvised. After intermission the next song played was ‘Gymnopedie no 1. By Satie, and transcribed by James Vitiello, who was noted as a fellow seven string player. In this song they kept the two guitars playing the melody in octave unison much of the time, some times they played harmonically but always monophonically. The third guitar played the base line which I’m glad to say was not ostinato. They did the revolving guitar thing, where they would trade off on who was playing what part, but never changed the structure of the piece. Bach was next; a Prelude and Fugue in F major. Since I am currently trying to pick which Bach piece to play for my sac state audition I was sure to pay attention. This piece transcribed by Foley, had one soprano melody and other parts playing with the bass line. Then the piece would switch with a counter point tenor and soprano, also offered were counter melodies, then back to unison. Bach really was a master at this type of music. The next movie theme was next, the hints are: a movie by Stephen Spielberg, about a profiteer of slave labor who saved a thousand people. It stated with only a bass line and soprano. Then next a very rhythmic, syncopated part with soprano and alto harmony, the song had frequent arpeggios and ended in a very harsh dissonant manner. It turned out to be a song from ‘Shindlers List’ composed by John Williams and transcribed by Grasso. ‘ Entr’ Acte’ from ‘Carmen’ was performed next. composed by Bizet and transcribed by Grasso. This was a Spanish style of song, the soprano and alto played a monophonic melody. And was good. My favorite piece of the night was next. it was ‘Hungarian Dance no 5’ by Brahms and transposed by Grasso. The meter changed in this song drastically from very fast to very slow. I felt this was their best performance of the night because of the technical qualities and the upbeat sound. They ended their main performance with a final movie theme. The Hints are: movie was made in the thirties, and was very famous. In the beginning all parts were playing what seamed like separate melodies. I didn’t recognized it at all, the when the chorus came they began to play in a more unison and monophonic style, the song was from ‘Wizard of Oz’, ‘Somewhere Over the Rainbow’. It was a good arrangement, however, I think the beginning was a paraphrase argument. The played one encore piece by George Harrison, by far the worst of the night. ‘Here comes the Sun’. He explained that this song was dedicated to the false god, krishna. Me being a Christian I hated it, and was amazed that he would give the background of the song and then play it, the song had many errors and felt it took away from the show.