

New Dorati Concerto Enjoys Rousing Premiere in Louisville

By William Mootz

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LOUISVILLE, Ky.— The outstanding event of the Louisville Orchestra's first subscription concert of the season this past weekend was the world premiere of Antal Dorati's Concerto for Cello and Orchestra, with Janos Starker as its brilliant soloist.

An opening night crowd that filled Louisville's Macauley Theater to capacity gave the premiere a rousing reception Friday night.

THE REASONS for this immediate audience acceptance of Dorati's new concerto are not hard to fathom. In the first place, he has composed a work in an unabashedly romantic vein. It plays to the strong points of the cello, exploiting the instrument's capacities for soaring song with great skill.

In the second place, cellist Starker is a superb musician and a dazzling virtuoso. With Louisville conductor Jorge Mester and his Louisville Orchestra giving Starker sympathetic support, the concerto got the best possible sendoff.

Dorati makes no secret of the fact that he leaned heavily on Starker's advice during the composing of Cello Concerto. In a disarming letter published in the orchestra's program notes, Dorati refers to Starker as his Joachim, the violinist who helped Brahms with technical matters when Brahms composed his violin concerto.

So it's not surprising that Dorati's concerto is gratefully laid out for its solo instrument, or that it makes imposing technical demands on the soloist.

What takes a listener by surprise, however, is the concerto's strong lyricism. The work bursts with good tunes, many of them strongly tinged with nostalgia for the composer's native Hungary.

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