

Strand Theatre Shelbyville, Inc.

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Shelby Community Band ? Review

Written by David on March, 1 2010

Shelby Community Band celebrates America?s musical heritage

The meticulously played melodies and rich, smooth, fluid, yet, rippling sounds of The Shelby Community Band filled the Strand Theatre Sunday afternoon in a well attended ?mid-winter? concert.

?The community band is local group of volunteers who love music and love to perform and share,? said conductor Russ Smith.

The 40 -plus musicians, semi-circled on the historic stage, guided the crowd through a 14 song journey of music written for movies to traditional marches and several, classic tunes from the Great American Songbook. Despite the band?s formal black and white attire the afternoon was a rather colorful parade of sound; full of spirit and rich, vibrant cadences, harmonies and melodies.

From the patriotic opening, a powerful rendition of ?The Star Spangled Banner,? sang by guest vocalist Marilyn Branstetter through a rousing instrumental finale of ?Stars and Stripes Forever,? it was an enjoyable, relaxing, yet, invigorating afternoon of musicianship.

In short, it was a concert filled to the brim with sounds as rich and shiny as the polished brass of the horns clustered on stage with the music intensely reflecting the talents, skills and passions of these volunteer musicians.

This passionate affection for musical heritage and its exquisite display during performance was highlighted by the bands take on ?West Side Story.? The tune is an epic, musical tour -de ?force of American song, which combines jazz syncopation with traditional and classical themes. As performed, by the Shelby Community Band, it showcased the finely melded, fluent sounds of instruments that mingle, merge and sing together in a diverse celebration of the roots of American music.

The showstopper, for most of the crowd, however, was Branstetter?s texturally, rich and well cadenced vocals on another Gershwin song (by George and Ira); ?They Can?t Take That Away From Me.?

For me, however, the awe inspiring moment of the afternoon was The Shelby Community Band?s take on ?Flight of the Piasa,? by Robert Sheldon. This musically challenging piece is a spiritually moving and varying melody that in its artistic essence soars, sails, glides and dives like a mythical bird in flight. It was an elegiac piece well played and finely phrased, musically. The band?s complex, yet, commanding performance literally made me want to close my eyes and fly away with the music.

Equally exhilarating, in another fashion, was the band?s play of a march lifted from the silver-screen of yore: ?Colonial Bogey,? better known as the song from the movie ?Bridge over the River Kwai.? A trilling march, played with the triumphant defiance of a song that celebrates the endurance of he human spirit.

Sunday?s concert, in fact, was an enjoyable, extended celebration which showcased the timeless, universal nature of the pleasures, sensations, moods and feel of music. It also emphasized the often unrecognized treasure that resides sometimes forgotten, but never silent, in our midst: the passionate, committed musicians of the Shelby Community Band.

Images on this post:



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This independent review does not express the opinion of the Strand Theatre.

