

Wolgast's technique imposing

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Music Critic

Listening to the General Student Recital held in All Faiths Auditorium on Thursday morning, a recent discussion with Path Metheny came to mind. During the course of that conversation Mr. Metheny brought up an issue that he felt to be an important one for musicians who did not play upon wind instruments. In his experience, there was a strong temptation for keyboard players, guitarists, and the like, to get carried away by the virtuosic potential of their instruments and thus to ignore the fact that the music must breathe: that there must be a living pulse behind the melodic line. This was, he felt, as true for ensembles as it was for the individual instrumentalists. His own group, he said, talked a lot about the need for them to let their music breathe, and our conversation ranged from Stokowski to Jim Hall and Bill Evans as examples of musicians who had this knack of making the music soar on phrase lines that seemed to have an inner life of their own.

All of this came to mind as I listened to Brett Wolgast perform the *Allegro Maestoso* from Chopin's *Sonata in b minor, Op. 58*. Mr. Wolgast has an imposing technique, but what I miss is the communication of insight into the music beyond the notes. Mr. Wolgast has met with considerable success with his performances of late, so I am probably in a minority, but I do wish that he would allow the music an opportunity to breathe naturally.

The program opened with Tammy McCarty's neat performance of two movements from C. Armstrong Gibbs' inconsequential *Suite in A* which was followed by Cheryl Glahn Parnell's performance of the second movement of Samuel Barber's substantial and

Thus, for example, the purpose of *Mi Chiamono Mimi* from *La Boheme* is not to have someone come out and sing that her name is Mimi, but rather to introduce Rudolfo and the audience to the life and background of a major character in the opera. If,

after the aria, the audience knows no more about Mimi than it did before the aria started, then the performer has failed in her task.

Both Susan Graber and Wendy Sistrunk coped well with their respective arias. Miss Graber sang *Chiamono Mimi* with a sweet tone allowing us to appreciate Puccini's musical magic. Miss Sistrunk had a more difficult task in attempting to represent one of the glories of the operatic literature, *Wie Nahte mir der Schlummer* from Weber's *Die Freischutz*. This is an aria that is surely difficult to perform because of its musical and histrionic demands, yet though she clearly had her hands

full to cope with both, her performance was attractive and commendable for attempting to convey a characterization of the work.

I cannot help but wonder, though, how many in the audience had the foggiest notion of what was going on during these two performances by young singers who, for all intents and purposes, were singing in a complicated code for which the audience had no key. The balance of the program consisted of the *Adagio* from J.C. Bach's *Concerto for cello in minor*, played by Mike Groneweller, and Vitali's *Chaconne*, performed with admirable tenacity by Diane Rader.

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