

It's always a treat to attend a BOP Symphonia concert on a Sunday afternoon and this Easter, Justus Rozemond, Conductor, challenged and trained the BOPS members to adopt a jazz flavour to their offering. They rose to the challenge much to the delight of the varied and enthusiastic audience.

The programme began with Scott Joplin's “Overture to Treemonisha” to welcome the audience and set the tone for a jazz theme. The second offering was the familiar “Rhapsody in Blue” by George Gershwin. The featured piano soloist, Soomin Kim, came on stage and sat at our Tauranga community's Steinway grand piano. The orchestra began and my skin tingled, so thrilled was I to be experiencing the calibre of the Symphonia players...and then Soomin began her solo. We were all enthralled. It is no surprise she won the BOPS Rising Stars concerto competition (2015) and has performed as a soloist with the Auckland Philharmonia. Sustained applause and cheers encouraged Soomin to give the audience an encore before intermission.

Gershwin welcomed us to the second half with the performance of “Three Preludes”, again settling the audience and preparing us for what was to follow. Duke Ellington's “Suite from the River” (1970) was an amazing performance demonstrating the variety of sounds made by the wide range of instruments making up the BOP Symphonia. The suite has eight sections with titles such as 'The Meander; The Giggling Rapids, The Vortex, The Falls' and the variety of sounds enabled us to visualise the scene. I found my eyes darting around the stage to see what instrument was creating that sound! The piece could well have been a movie score. Again the audience responded enthusiastically and the Symphonia performed “In the Mood” to send us on our way home. They certainly sent us off exhilarated and in awe of the skills of our BOP Symphonia members who volunteer their time for our enjoyment.

See you all again soon!

Jocelyn Buchanan

(for Tauranga Jazz Society)