

Anton Kuerti, Pianist

Midland Symphony Orchestra's new conductor off to an impressive start

by Gregory H. Largent | The Saginaw News
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Maestra Antonia Joy Wilson's debut as artistic director and conductor of the Midland Symphony Orchestra gave a hint of wonderful things to come.

The guest artist for Saturday's opening of the 73rd season was internationally acclaimed pianist Anton Kuerti. Oddly, the auditorium of the Midland Center for the Arts was only three-fourths full.

Wilson began Wagner's "Prelude to Die Meistersinger"....

The performance of the Mendelssohn Piano Concerto No. 2 in G Minor was magnificent. Kuerti is that rare artist who is even better than his press release. This was rich, mature music-making of the highest order, full of fire and passion.

Wilson had prepared the orchestra with precision. The bowings throughout the strings were clean and unified. There were many glorious moments where the shaping of the musical line was spellbinding. Kuerti's amazing keyboard technique was always at the service of the music.

Both of Mendelssohn's fast movements were brilliantly performed. The andante movement was food for the soul. From the lovely cello and viola opening in andante to Kuerti's beautiful vocal playing, everything was just right. The inventiveness of Mendelssohn was lifted up and felt as if it was created in the moment.

The Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 5 demonstrated Wilson's skill to the fullest. She showed her ability to capture the little details and had control of the myriad of tempo demands of this work.... The fourth movement was exciting with intense music-making by everyone on the stage. It realized the full dynamic range of the orchestra and brought to life the full emotion and passion of Tchaikovsky.

If this evening was a hint of things to come from Wilson and the orchestra, then it should get harder to buy a ticket for the next concert. She is moving the Midland Symphony Orchestra in the right direction. Wilson is capable of making exciting music full of rich detail and color.