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Classical review: Portland Symphony Orchestra finishes season with a flourish

A rare minor key work by Mozart was followed by a thrilling performance of Brahms' Fourth Symphony.

BY STEVE FEENEY, MAY 24, 2023

The Portland Symphony Orchestra concluded its classical music season with a powerful flourish on Tuesday night before a large and appreciative audience at Merrill Auditorium in Portland. A performance of Concerto No. 24 for Piano and Orchestra by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart featured guest Alon Goldstein at the keyboard, fronting a smaller edition of the orchestra.

The rare minor key work featured the heavenly melodies and symmetries typical of the amazing 18th century master. But there was also an intensity of purpose and increased pairing of the orchestral voices, which Goldstein noted in his brief remarks upon taking the stage, which would go on to attract the attention of both Beethoven and Brahms.

The pianism was spirited, reminding one that there's nothing like a bit of well-played Mozart to lift the spirits, even when hearing a supposed "darker" piece.

As an encore, Goldstein brought things into a more recent vintage with an early jazz-inflected solo performance derived from Leonard Bernstein's "Age of Anxiety." More joyful than anxious, the piece delighted under the pianist's fleet fingers, adding a welcome bit of bounce to the proceedings.

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Alon Goldstein, piano