

**“Andalito profizmus”**  
**A sweet (dulcet) proficiency (or professionalism)**  
**Magyar Telekom Szimfonikus, Budapest**  
**December 1, 2005**

**Translation by Dr. Francis Ö. Dudás, MIT**

Bernstein, Gershwin and Nino Rota would at the outset seem to make for an adequately popular concert, but the result is quite different if an outstanding conductor directs the group. Dante Anzolini is outstanding (exceptional, extraordinary) – moreover, he seems to view it as his calling to popularize the works of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, to seek out the young composers of our time.

Of course, the composers mentioned in the introduction don’t need a sales pitch, so his task here is rather to get the audience to view (hear) works they think they know in a little different light: he seems driven to make sure that the viewer (listener) notices the smallest details, almost provocatively mining what initially seem to be merely decorative snatches of melody out of the dense (fabric of the music), then displaying them before us. Besides, Anzolini conducts with considerable artistic flair: he treads the whole expanse of the podium for fortissimos, while he marks pianos by leaning against the rail, giving direction to sections at a time with a wink or merely a lifted eyebrow. The grand elegance with which he directs the concert is a true rarity. The conductor fundamentally influences the quality of an orchestra’s performance. This basic truth was again confirmed in this instance: over the course of the evening, the percussion section of the Hungarian Telekom Symphony Orchestra gave a performance such as I have never before witnessed from them. All four works demanded great intensity from them, and they satisfied this demand with evident ease.

In the first half of the concert, we heard Bernstein’s Overture to *Candide*, followed by an arrangement from Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess* suite. The Overture to *Candide* is relatively favored among symphony orchestras, it is a lighter toned – but it nevertheless bears emphasis: far from simple – it is an excellent selection to begin a concert. The most familiar melodies of the opera sound forth in it, so that in this respect it can be considered a traditional work. At the same time, it is a unified piece in itself, and provides an outstanding opportunity for virtuosity by the woodwinds. It was here that we witnessed how, as if the conductor were gripped by passion, he drove the tempo excessively during the accelerandos...

I admit I haven’t yet heard a live performance of Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess* suite, but I can assert without any risk that it is an excellent “demo piece” for the opera: the tunes that we like to whistle show up, and, in contrast with the Bernstein piece, it’s not just the woodwinds but the strings get an opportunity to introduce themselves as well. On this evening, it was this “piece within the piece” that succeeded best, with a pair of first violins and a pair of second violins playing the melody of one of Bess’s arias.

Intermission was followed by Nino Rota’s suite written for Fellini’s “*The Road (La Strada)*,” which also seems to be somewhat lighter fare, but isn’t by a long shot. It is a

sequence of mood-images from the film, with rhythmic segues linking the themes. Here, with the help of the music, we can reconstruct our memories of the film, or, if we've not seen it, we can admire (meditate on) Rota's courage in compressing starkly contrasting themes into a single work, which he has molded and adapted to each other with great expertise (insight). "La Strada" moreover also gives the Hungarian Telekom Symphonic Orchestra's soloists an opportunity for virtuosity. Even in a large orchestra, the brass section usually presents a problem, because it is the imprecision of their playing that most glaringly violates the orchestra's otherwise unified sound... In this case, we did not have to deal with this otherwise general problem: the brass section, of very young players, played this difficult piece precisely, in unison, and with great care.

Lastly, we heard an arrangement of Bernstein's West Side Story suite. For the most part, individual instruments play what were originally vocal solos, while the orchestra "supports" the line with harmonies – one thinks the piece is said and done. No, things are not quite so simple. Bernstein doesn't make it easy for the musicians: the familiar melodies are often scored with unusual and startling orchestrations. For example, he was able to arrange a tenor solo for solo bassoon, better to reflect the tone of the text, thereby visiting no small task on the musicians. Here, also, the percussion section gets a prominent role: those human sounds (body sounds) that are not so uncommon in later compositions – the clicks and chirps and yells – were theirs to produce....

**Ursula Kónya**  
**Kontextus.hu**