

MUSIC

Doctor musicians operate smoothly

Ensemble performs health-care benefit

DONALD ROSENBERG
Plain Dealer Reporter

Anyone lucky enough to be bitten by the classical-music bug knows there is no cure for this welcome ailment. For many, it lasts a lifetime.

Physicians happen to be high on the list of blissfully afflicted, as the World Doctors Orchestra trumpeted Sunday at Severance Hall, where the ensemble made its U.S. debut. Along with exploring great repertoire, these devoted amateurs send the message that everyone deserves quality health care.

The orchestra, which raises money through benefit concerts, was born last year in Berlin. Proceeds from its Severance performance will go to the Hugo Tempel-

man Foundation in South Africa and the Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland.

An enthusiastic audience greeted the orchestra Sunday, when founder and conductor Stefan Willich led music by Copland, Beethoven and Brahms. The ensemble comprises about 80 players — a quarter from the United States — representing 14 countries. At this early point, the group hasn't reached "world" status: Africa, Asia and South America have yet to send musicians.

Still, the orchestra showed dedication to the cause under Willich, who guided his players with alacrity. After only a handful of rehearsals, the ensemble had tentative moments in terms of cohesion, attack and balance. But there was much to enjoy as the orchestra probed the inner workings of the scores at hand, like so many surgeons in action.

It was a nice gesture to open with

REVIEW

World Doctors Orchestra

an American work, Copland's "An Outdoor Overture." Willich led a stately reading that embraced the music's open-hearted fervor.

Beethoven's so-called Triple Concerto brought on three professionals with ties to the Cleveland Institute of Music. Pianist Sergei Babayan, violinist Annie Fullard and cellist Sæunn Thorsteinsdottir managed their roles with bravura and sensitivity.

Babayan was the performance's spark plug, alternating between fierce articulation and ethereal delicacy. His colleagues provided complementary pleasures, Fullard's gleaming artistry and Thorsteinsdottir's lyrical warmth adding dramatic flair and chamber-music intimacy. Willich and company sounded in-

spired by their guests' charismatic contributions.

The program's big work was Brahms' Symphony No. 1, which found the orchestra reveling in the saturated sonorities, sweeping phrases and noble utterances. Willich shaped the score with enormous flexibility, sometimes stretching things to the edge. Brahms' tricky rhythms occasionally taxed the players.

But the ensemble gave exuberant voice to the majestic pages, especially the aristocratic string and trombone passages in the finale. The solo violin, horn and oboe playing was distinguished: No second opinion necessary.

And the encore, Sousa's "The Stars and Stripes Forever," received spacious treatment, with a sole (terrific) piccolo helping to keep all spirits in good health.

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Quirky 'Lightbulb' to start film festival

The Cleveland International Film Festival will minate its opening-night plans today when it nounces that "Lightbulb" kicks off the annual pa of movies.

A quirky comedy-drama starring Dallas Roberts Jeremy Renner, "Lightbulb" opens the 33rd versio the festival on Thursday, March 19, at Tower City (mas.

The film is from director Jeff Balmeyer, who p ously gave us "Danny Deckchair." (You might r Rhys Ifans attempting to float about Australia in a chair attached to several balloons.)

"Lightbulb" follows the misadventures of a s: time inventor and his best friend, and is based o real-life foibles of screenwriter and producer Cram.

This year's festival runs through Sunday, Marc and will feature more than 300 films. Tickets & sale to Cleveland Film Society members on Friday 27, and to the public on Friday, March 6. Tickets & opening-night film and gala are \$125 (\$100 for & bers).

The hefty program guides, which help us figur what to see when, should hit the streets the we Feb. 23. For details, go to www.clevelandfilm.org.

— Clint O'Co

COMMENTARY

Stunt Pepsi ad on 'SNL' a sign of desperation

PHIL ROSENTHAL
Chicago Tribune

The first one was subtle. Maybe you noticed it was running in an

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PUSH	(PG13)	(1:20 / 4:20) / 7:00 / 9:40
TAKEN	(PG13)	(1:40 / 4:40) / 7:50 / 10:30
THE UNINVITED	(PG13)	(2:10 / 5:10) / 8:00 / 10:30
PAUL BLART MALL COP	(PG)	(2:00 / 5:00) / 7:40 / 10:10
HOTEL FOR DOGS	(PG)	(1:10 / 4:10) / 6:40 / 9:10
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