

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
A teacher affects eternity;
he can never tell where his influence stops.
— Henry Brooks Adams, American historian and author (1838-1918)

Guitarists bring ‘Rain’

By Annette Northey

THE Regional Art Gallery was the place to be on Sunday evening where Italian classical guitarists Andrea Vettoretti and Massimo Scattolin courted an appreciative audience with a cleverly balanced and varied program of exquisite pieces.

Opening with Vettoretti’s composition from his newest album, Rain, both guitarists enchanted the audience with ‘Sensations’ - a pensive contemporary piece carefully crafted to blend the old with the new, but maintaining the artistic techniques ever so coveted in the unforgiving world of classical guitar performance. Originally composed for solo guitar, Scattolin arranged a second part so the two could perform it together.

“I didn’t want my friend to get lonely,” Scattolin joked.

Next on the program was a medley of five easily recognisable Ennio Morricone pieces, composed for ‘spaghetti’ westerns, the introductory theme being the most famous of all; that from the movie The Good, the Bad and the Ugly.

The following four themes were executed brilliantly, given the most difficult task for a guitar (two in this case) or piano is to replicate the several parts of a piece composed originally for orchestra. The medley was nicely rounded off with a return to the first theme, readying the audience for their hearty applause.

All the pieces on Scattolin and Vettoretti’s collaborative album, Once Upon a Time, are representative of “... me remembering my boyhood,” revealed Scattolin.

He especially loved the westerns that the two compatriots, Morricone and film director Sergio Leone, worked on together.

Tarrega’s ‘Gran Jota’ (pron. horta [a jota is a Spanish dance or melody]) was next up on the program and this is where Scattolin’s talent for arranging shone through. Once again writing a second part to keep Vettoretti company, the result was by no means an accompaniment but rather a perfectly apportioned duet, with first part (melody) and second part (harmony and rhythm) transitioning seamlessly back and forth between the two guitars, showcasing the flexibility and skill of both players.

Gran Jota, a virtuoso piece, put them both to the test, employing many of the expressive techniques possible on the classical guitar - muting, tapping rhythms on the wood and lightning-fast harmonics to name only a few. Undulating metre changes from 3/4 time to 6/8 and back again, coupled with tempo changes, built excitement and tension that was resolved by a quickening passage of florid fingerwork (incorporating harmonics) to end the piece - it was executed brilliantly by both.

The pair then indulged the audience with another medley, Memories of Spain, composed by Scattolin himself.

This was a delectable sampler of the many styles of Spanish music, each with its own dramatic character.

When summoning Andalusia and its characteristic flamenco music, the subtle tonal differences of the two guitars became apparent. Both custom made by luthier Ennio Guido, Scattolin’s guitar sounded considerably brighter and brassier than Vettoretti’s when using the rasgueado technique (fast strumming alternating between thumb and four fingers), but I am inclined to put this down to the strings and composition of the fingernails.



Andrea Vettoretti and Massimo Scattolin entertain at the Regional Art Gallery.
PICTURE: Supplied

‘What a treat for Broken Hill to be able to host musicians of this calibre’

Scattolin’s masterful composition again showcased the technical facility of both, with only a couple of slips near the end by the composer around the uppermost frets (12-16?), possibly a momentary loss of concentration.

Not ready to let them bow out just yet, the audience called for not one, but two, encores, to which the talented gentlemen responded with one of each’s own compositions.

Scattolin has clearly demonstrated his gift for composition, especially the challenging configuration of two guitars, while on Sunday evening Vettoretti confirmed his place in the future as a leading international guitarist and innovator of musical style.

What a treat for Broken Hill to be able to host musicians of this calibre.

It’s too bad the Rain they brought with them was the metaphorical type, and not the real thing.



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