

# Santa Rosa Symphony opens season with high energy

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The Santa Rosa Symphony under Music Director Bruno Ferrandis opened its second season at the Green Music Center Saturday night with two, boldly colored works by Dmitri Shostakovich, jump-started by John Adams' "Short Ride in a Fast Machine."

The program evoked the edgy glamour of a James Bond thriller, complete with fast cars (the Adams piece), exotic gadgetry (the harps and celesta keyboard in the Shostakovich works) and Cold War intrigue (the jarring angularity of Shostakovich's harmonies).

The lesser-known Russian work - Shostakovich's 1955 Violin Concerto performed before intermission by Albanian violinist Tedi Papavrami - proved to be the high note of the evening.

Wearing a dark turtleneck and suit, Papavrami brought to mind the sinewy athleticism of actor Daniel Craig in the 2006 remake of the James Bond film, "Casino Royale," based on Ian Fleming's 1953 novel.

Out of the gate, the 42-year-old violinist engaged the audience with his silken tone. Despite the relentless pace of the piece and its thorny challenges, he made it all seem effortless.

Papavrami brought absolute conviction to the concerto, which starts out dreamily with a Nocturne but kicks into gear in the Scherzo. Like a thoroughbred pulling into the home stretch, he delivered an impressively clean cadenza, linking the lush, expressivity of the Largo to the fun, rhythmic romp of the Allegro finale.

Under Ferrandis' baton, the orchestra lent sensitive support, providing balance but never overpowering the soloist.

The concerto received a well-deserved standing ovation, as did Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5 after intermission. Regarded as the composer's most popular symphony, the four-movement work provided an exhausting work-out for the entire orchestra.

The violins were especially impressive in the opening, leaning aggressively into the beat. The cellos took over with authority in the Allegretto, giving way to the mocking woodwinds and militaristic brass and percussion.

In the eerie Largo movement, solos by oboe and flute underscored the work's pathos. Those lulled off to sleep were woken up by the Allegro, with its bombastic timpani, brass fanfares and steely melodies.

The concert opened with a bang with John Adams' manic but fun-loving "Short Ride in a Fast Machine." With the two Shostakovich works to follow, the program kept the energy high - perfect for those who prefer to be shaken, not stirred.

The concert will be repeated at 8 p.m. Monday at the Green Music Center's Weill Hall.