

REVIEW from The Mercury, Wednesday 3 March 2004-04-06

CONDUCTOR STIRS THE BLOOD

A Gala Celebration
Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra
February 27
Federation Concert Hall
Sebastian Lang-Lessing, conductor
Michele Campanella, piano

A rejuvenated Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra returned to the Federation Concert Hall stage on Friday night to launch its 2004 season.

Led by the infectious excitement of new chief conductor Sebastian Lang-Lessing, Dvorak's *Carnival Overture* provided a spectacular festive opening.

German-born Lang-Lessing showed he was not just at home in European music, giving a preview of the orchestra's Australian music recording project, Peter Sculthorpe's echoing *From High Hills*.

Then Italian Michele Campanella impressed with Liszt's second piano concerto. The pianist's glittering runs ran fluidly through the rich meld of the orchestra in this darkly exuberant music.

Powerful chords and dramatic dynamic changes made this an exciting performance, as was an octave-ridden Liszt encore that left both audience and Campanella breathless.

The layers of luscious sound in Dvorak's *Symphony No 8* showed the orchestra obviously responded to its wildly passionate new conductor as he hurled himself about the podium.

The leaping Lang-Lessing whipped the orchestra into a joyous frenzy without sacrificing any of Dvorak's delicate finger work or sentimental melodies.

The changes between languid and triumphant were marked and, perhaps more importantly, the transitions between styles was effortlessly smooth.

If this is the standard to expect in the coming year, then expect more packed halls.

Roll on season 2004!