

Arts & Entertainment

BCO concert
experience is a must

On May 10, I attended the fourth concert at UVM's Redstone Recital Hall by the newly formed BCO in the direction of its music director and conductor, Michael Hopkins.

My impressions at the first concert by this group were highly positive, and this second hearing of the group enhances that original opinion. The concert featured two Concerti Grossi (Handel and Hopkins) and two Serenades (Mozart and Dvorak).

The opening Handel concerto was brilliantly sounded, the acoustics of the Recital Hall seem especially favorable to string sound. It was the no. 3 from Opus 6, in e-minor. The three soloists, Ira Morris, Carolyn Lukancic and John Dunlop, were outstanding both in this and in the Hopkins work. It was a straightforward, uncluttered version of the concerto, and sent the evening off into a grand start.

Mozart was next in line with his *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*. This perhaps overly well-known piece sounded fresh and full of the delights which it contains. The opening octaves were well tuned, and the whole serenade was a delight to listen to, even if or because you knew the work well.

The Hopkins Concerto Grosso no. 1 patterned itself on the Bloch Concerto Grosso, which the group played at its first concert, by using piano instead of a harpsichord as one of the continuo instruments.

It was a full-bodied work, in two sections that were comprised of a fast and a slow section each. It was an effective piece of writing, which the audience recognized, giving the composer/conductor a separate standing ovation for the composition itself, with which the orchestra members joined wholeheartedly. The work should be in every chamber orchestra's repertoire.

The concert ended with a rousing and enlightening performance of the Serenade for Strings, op. 22 by Dvorak. Hopkins expressed his being captivated by the writing in this serenade, and that captivation translated easily into a wonderful performance of the work, full of the vibrancy and dance rhythms that the composer utilized.

In a note in the program booklet, Hopkins expressed their intention to do all 12 of the Concerti Grossi from Handel's op. 6 during the first and succeeding seasons, leading up to the 250th anniversary of the composer's passing. May they make that goal.

They also announced that on their final concert of the season to be held Saturday, June 21, the two Young Artists Award winners will appear on the program in a work by Vivaldi.

