

The SunPost

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A Maestro Among Us

Eduardo Marturet Makes Miami Worldly Symphonic

By John Hood

The smell of marijuana is not lurking in the rafters; there is no beer on the floor or vomit in the vestibule, no muddled drone of ho-hum classics to punctuate the proceedings, and that gaggle of teens that live only to crowd the stage is noticeably absent. Still there's a charge in the air, an energy that exists only when a large group of like minds assembles in anticipation of something extraordinary.



The lights dim, as is their wont, but they don't dim to screams and shrieks and shouts, they dim to attention, and every face turns toward the front of the house.

Maestro Eduardo Marturet conducts a rehearsal of the Miami Symphony Orchestra at Ransom Everglades School Tuesday evening. Photo by Mitchell Zachs/Magicalphotos.com

Then a man appears - distinguished, assured, welcome - and those faces become vocal, rumbling a bravo to mark the

beginning of a rare occasion.

That man is Maestro Eduardo Marturet and there's damn good reason why a roar has erupted among even the most reticent of attendees - he's about to lead the Miami Symphony Orchestra to a place that's out of this world.

And, get this: The man's gonna take us with him.

On paper Marturet might not seem to be the typical classical conductor; that's because he isn't. Born in Caracas and schooled in Cambridge, he comes to the music from a world that includes far more than European drawing rooms and exclusive East Coast conservatories. Sure there was the initial precocity - percussion at 3; piano by 7 - and yes, his formative schooling was decidedly private, but Marturet's birthplace allows him an acuity few conductors or composers can claim, let alone muster.

Call it full world class.

It is a worldliness that has served the whole world well. As head of the Orquesta Filarmónica de Buenos Aires, Marturet ensured that Argentines heard there was concert life outside of Piazzolla. At the helm of the Berliner Symphoniker, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra and the Symfoniorkesteret i Stavanger in Norway, Marturet opened ears to the sounds of a whole 'nother Hemisphere. Along the way he's shared stages with Rostropovich and been nominated for a Latin Grammy.

It is a cross-cultural cool that makes Marturet the perfect match for Miami, and the pitch-perfect man to conduct our namesake Symphony - a polyglot perfectionist of uncommon history. Perhaps that's why Miami Symphony Orchestra's founding maestro, the late Manuel Ochoa who founded the symphony in 1989, personally anointed Marturet to be his successor as music director.

You betcha.

Over the last season alone Marturet has pitted Copland against de Rivera, Gershwin against Marquez, and let Arnold have the last say over Bach. And both crowd and composer have come out the stronger, and the wiser. He's taken Bavaria to Belgium, the Andes to Oslo, and put Miami on the serious side of the good life, in itself no easy feat within a city long known for fun and sun.

But don't think for a moment that Marturet is content to be mere ambassador-of-classical to the world-at-large. In addition to the nearly 40 works he's recorded with some of the globe's best orchestras, he's scored three multi-award winning movies (*Miranda*, *Manuela Saenz* and *Oriana*), and composed, conducted and recorded some 14 chamber and symphonic works of his own. Add the great good works Marturet continues to perform on behalf of attuned children in both Miami and his native Venezuela and you have all the components of class.

And now the silence, that pregnant pause when expectations abound, the looming calm before the storm. Marturet mounts the podium, bows to the audience, nods to his orchestra, lifts the baton and the world sweeps into beauty and pathos. It is Dvorak's 8th, commonly called "The English Symphony" because it was England where it was first printed and at Cambridge where its performance earned the Czech master an honorary doctorate. Marturet, himself a Cambridge man, knows the importance of the piece, its history, its mystery, and the luxury of its transcendence. A European-schooled South American leading us into Bavarian temptation - sounds kinda like Miami.

Eduardo Marturet closes his debut full season with Miami Symphony Orchestra with "A Romantic Farewell," Ambroise Thomas' Overture "Mignon," Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No 2, Brahms' Symphony No 4 OP 98 in E Minor, with guest soloist Vanessa Perez on piano, at 8 p.m. Saturday at UM's Gusman Hall, 1314 Miller Drive, Coral Gables, and at 8 p.m. Sunday at Lincoln Theatre, 541 Lincoln Road, Miami Beach. Ticket prices range from \$15 to \$50. Call 305-275-5666 or visit www.miamisymphony.org.

Hood is online at therealjohnhood.com.

Comments? E-mail letters@miamisunpost.com.