

Born in a Violin Case

The Starling Chamber Orchestra in Göggingen's Park Theater

(ulos) Several of the highly talented musicians of the excellent Starling Chamber Orchestra seem to have been born in a violin case: children virtuosos could hardly be more vivacious, disarmingly relaxed and deeply rooted than was the case in the Park Theater for the first performance of this European tour.

Conductor Kurt Sassmannshaus guides this talent forge with a cautious hand, soloists move in and out of the orchestra. The program was geared towards the violin: from Paganini's shadows emerged personalities of violinists /composers whose every breath was dedicated to virtuoso works: These works have clear structures, they are filled with romantic fantasy and colorful folk melodies, and the potential of the instrument is driven to its zenith.

It was stunning to see the verve and self confidence, the mature sound production and technical bravura in the mastery of the young soloists' tasks: Tessa Lark allowed Wieniawski's "Legende" to blossom with grace and charm in shining cantilenas.

Charles Yang celebrated Paganini's "Cantabile" with great projection. Kreisler's "Tambourin Chinois", played by the ten year old Hye Yoon Park, was presented as a bravura cream puff full of bow effects and magic tricks; temperament, ease, and precise intonation were impressively balanced.

Suyeon Lee let her bow perform at hot blooded dance in Wieniawski's "Scherzo tarantella": The commanding execution of double stop passages, the rapid changes from bowing to pizzicato phrases were as impressive as the passion and graciousness of her performance.

The soloists joined the ranks of the Starling Chamber Orchestra with just as much enthusiasm to experience solo works from the perspective of orchestral accompaniment. The pure orchestral pieces did not alter the impression: Barber's famous Adagio, Ludwig Wilhelm Maurer's Allegro from his Symphonia Concertante for four violins, and Dvorak String Serenade op. 22 favored the sweet and compelling sounds of the violins and violas; the four celli and the double bass could not quite match the sound volume.

Waves of enthusiasm swelled yet again when Stephanie Zyzack – with a child's hands and a child's soul – fiddled such courage into a heartfelt and lively rendition of Kreisler's Preludium and Allegro that her young age seemed to have been suspended.

Jonathan Miron got into the saddle of Sarasate's "Zigeunerweisen" like a dare devil, as if that was the most usual everyday fare for a ten year old.

A very responsible task for Kurt Sassmannshaus and the Internationale Kunst Akademie Liechtenstein to not only unlock the mystery of the instrument for these talents, but to guide them step by step into the inner sanctums of music.