

Yugoslavian brings violin to life

Kolundzija shows romantic flair at Randolph-Macon

By FRANCIS CHURCH

Jovan Kolundzija brought a mellow-sounding violin produced in 1754 by Pietro Guarneri of Venice to Blackwell Auditorium at Randolph-Macon College in Ashland last night.

Even the best of violins requires a human who can bring it to life. Kolundzija was able to accomplish this with a flair for the romantic characteristic of his central European heritage.

The young Yugoslavian possessed a rich and wide vibrato and ability to negotiate the most speedy passages with the left hand. The bow arm likewise could move effortlessly and easily over all four strings, although at times its contact with the instrument was less than perfect.

All this lay well with such romantic pieces as Cesar Franck's Sonata in A Major, Josef Suk's Four Pieces for Violin and Piano and Camille Saint-Saens' Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso.

Unfortunately, in Kolundzija's case, Giuseppe Tartini's Sonata for Violin and Piano in

MUSIC REVIEW

G minor, subtitled "Devil's Trill," comes from the early 18th century and demands a more spare and linear style.

The thick and sultry opening bars hung as heavily on the listener's ears as the heat and humidity did over one's body in the unair-conditioned auditorium in this first work on last night's program.

Occasionally the bow jerked rather than flowed smoothly. The trills turned out to be the very devil for Kolundzija. Uncertain intonation marred the closing bars of this sonata.

The Franck sonata was something else. Kolundzija and his sister, Nada, who presided at the piano, combined forces to produce a warm and sensitive account of this somewhat rambling and repetitive work.

There were drama and strength in the heavy passages and transparency and shiny gloss to those brief moments when Franck

offers a preview of the impressionism of Debussy and Ravel.

Before the evening was over, one wished that Nada Kolundzija had come on stage alone to give the listeners a more penetrating look at the musical artistry that she unquestionably possesses.

While the Franck work is somewhat long and overstated, the four relatively short pieces by Suk enabled the violinist to exploit nearly every form of expressionism from soft-toned sadness to out-and-out passion, from a soft-hued opening ballad to a whirlwind closing "burlesque."

This was the soloist's time to show and tell! Finally, Kolundzija unleashed all his technical equipment in a shower of notes in the Saint-Saens number, a favorite of violinists the world over.

Sweeping arpeggios, sky-high harmonics, a multitude of double stops: They were all there, and the soloist reveled in them.

The inevitable encore was another all-time favorite: Fritz Kreisler's "Schoen Rosmarin."

MAXIM GERSHUNOFF ATTRACTIONS, INC.

502 PARK AVENUE • NEW YORK • NEW YORK • 10022 • (212) 752-5925