



Recital: Luur-Metalls - Spanish Brass Quintet

7:30 P.M. May 29

David Jones, reporter

ITG Treasurer

The Friday evening performance of the quintet, Luur-Metalls, was a real audience pleaser and one of the highlights of the Conference. Founded in 1989 by 5 young men from the National Youth Orchestra of Spain, Luur-Metalls has already won major international competitions and established itself as one of the worlds leading brass quintets. After listening to their concert the audience seemed to agree as they rose almost as one for a standing ovation. Luur-Metalls' strong emphasis on group musicality was evident throughout the program, and the quintet utilized dynamic levels, ranging from a virtual whisper to a thundering fortissimo, with great effectiveness. The tonal quality and tuning of the group was impeccable. It's hard to find enough superlatives to describe the truly outstanding nature of their performance.

The concert opened with Bach's *Concerto in g minor*, BWV 1041. The first and third movements were notable for their use of the piccolo trumpet throughout while the transitions from trumpet to piccolo trumpet and back were smooth and effortless. The second movement was unusual for it's very soft dynamic level, which exemplified the group's control of their instruments.



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No Comment, by Czechoslovakian composer J. Filas, was the quintet's second offering. This composition was premiered by Luur-Metalls in Italy last summer and, judging from the reaction of the crowd, this piece may be destined to become a staple of the quintet repertoire. The two movement work features cascading interplay among the various voices of the quintet in short soli sections with the other instruments providing a contrasting underpinning. The interplay between the two trumpets was identical in both sound and tonal quality. The second movement was in sections almost like a prayer with the trombone and tuba supporting a muted horn solo that was then picked up by the muted trumpets. After a transition to open horns and a gradual crescendo, it was back to muted trumpets with sustaining notes from the rest of the quintet to the end of the work.



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During a short intermission the stage set-up changed from sitting to standing. The second half began with *Passages* by French jazz composer J. Caratini. This is his first work for quintet and the five movements paint a very musical portrait. There is a pulsating rhythm that underscores the entire piece starting with a tuba solo and then progressing to duets and trios that utilize various

combinations of the group's instrumentation. Portions of the work make extensive use of alternating (pianissimo - fortissimo) dynamics. This is another composition that may soon find it's way into the standard quintet repertoire.

The next work, *Spanish Suite*, featured a collection of three popular tunes by De Falla, Albeniz, and Chabrier. *La Farruca* (De Falla) begins with a horn call answered by the trumpet and leading into a solo that is in turn answered by the other members of the quintet playing as an ensemble. Following a transition back to the horn solo line, the quintet joins in and the tempo accelerates as the piece races to a conclusion. (Albeniz) utilizes the piccolo and trumpet trading-off the melody line. Once again the two trumpets played almost as one with transitions between the two impossible to pick out unless you're watching closely. As the work progresses the horn picks up the melody, turns it over to the piccolo trumpet and joins the tuba in a smooth and mellow backup to the end. The final tune, *Espana*, (Chabrier) emphasizes ensemble playing interspersed with short soli sections by each of the lower voices as well as a trumpet duet. With eyes closed it was possible to feel transported to the Spanish countryside.

The final work on the program was Crespo's *Suite Americana*. The three movements, *Bossa-Nova*, *Vals Peruano*, and *Ragtime*, were a delight to both watch and hear. The quintet swayed slightly in time with the bossa-nova beat established by the trombone's opening licks and followed quickly by the remainder of the group. The movement only added to the quality of the music. The *Ragtime* movement featured the members physically moving downstage as their solo lines came up. The audience was tested when the music seemed to end several times only to pick back up after the "grand pauses."

Returning to the stage, Luur-Metalls gave this very appreciative audience a double encore. The first, *Handful of Keys*, a Canadian Brass standard, was dedicated to Fred Mills who has worked extensively with the quintet over the last year. Luur-Metalls even added a variation of the stand-up, sit-down routine that Fred and the Canadian Brass used to do. The final encore was *Zapateado* from the 19th century Spanish opera *La Tempranico*. It was an excellent way to end a fantastic performance and the audience showed its appreciation with another standing ovation.