

SEEN AND HEARD INTERNATIONAL

MusicWeb International's Worldwide Concert and Opera Reviews

OPERA REVIEWS

UK CONCERTS

INTERNATIONAL CONCERTS

[Inspired Orchestra Tours](#)

Performance travel experts. Perform in dynamic venues worldwide!

< >

[Piano Recital Nov 17 8pm](#)

Henry Wong Doe at Carnegie Hall Ravel, Ligeti, Messiaen

Ads by Google

Clicking Google advertisements helps keep MusicWeb subscription-free.

319,647 concert and opera reviews were read in October.

SEEN AND HEARD CONCERT REVIEW

Mussorgsky, Bruch, Liszt, Dvořák: Lara St John (violin), Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Josep Caballé-Domenech, Cadogan Hall, London, 14.10.2008 (BBr)

Mussorgsky, arranged by Rimsky-Korsakov: Night on the Bare Mountain (1866)

Max Bruch: Violin Concerto No.1 in G minor, op.26 (1864/1866 rev 1868)

Liszt, arranged by Martin Kennedy and Lara St John: Totentanz (1838 – 1849 rev 1853 and 1859)

Dvořák: Symphony No.9 in E minor, From the New World, op.95 (1893)

Here's a well planned concert of popular classics which has much to offer. Starting with a hair-raising performance of Rimsky's version of Mussorgsky's *Night on a Bare Mountain* the RPO, on top form, threw itself into the fun of the game with a vengeance. How much better it would have been to have had Mussorgsky's original version which is truly startling and doesn't have a pretty ending. But I'm happy with what we got for it was very well done.

Bruch's *Concerto* is a well trodden path but tonight Canadian Lara St John really gave herself to the piece and produced as fine a performance, occasionally throwing caution to the wind, as I have

Other Links

[Archived Reviews 1999 - 2007](#)
[MusicWeb's Disc Review Pages](#)
[The MusicWeb Bulletin Board](#)
[About Seen and Heard](#)
[Contributors List](#)
[Contact Us](#)

Editorial Board

[Editor - Bill Kenny](#)
[Founder - Len Mullenger](#)

Google Site Search

Internet MusicWeb

The Opera Critic

The World of Opera

ever heard. The slow movement was meltingly beautiful and the finale full of fireworks. The wind section must be mentioned here for it was magnificent throughout.

It cannot be denied that *Totentanz* is a magnificent work for piano and orchestra and I am of the opinion that the reason Liszt wrote it that way is because it would simply not work as a work for violin and orchestra. Lara St John has said however, "I have long been rather miffed at (Liszt) for not having written anything for violin and orchestra, and I consider this *Totentanz* (arrangement) a solution to that small oversight." One of the important things about the Liszt original is the amount of weight he gives to the left hand of the piano, especially when it joins with the heavy brass, an impossibility in a version for violin. All that this arrangement does is show off St John's fabulous technique well enough, but not much of her musicality. In the end, this arrangement is a piece which does Ms St John no real favours and to show off the whole of her undoubted talents, she might have done better to have approached one of Canada's many superb composers for a new work, perhaps John Estacio, Christos Hatzis, Andrew P MacDonald or Rodney Sharman to name only a few. Any one of them could have supplied a work showing off Ms St. John's gifts to the full.

Dvořák's *New World* was played "without frills". The conductor chose not to impose anything on the music and what we got was a straightforward account of this great work which didn't explore any new avenues or unearth any hitherto unknown secrets. The brass really came into their own here and special mention must be made of the section, also special plaudits for Leila Ward for her beautiful playing of the famous slow movement theme.

I have known the work of Josep Caballé-Domenech from both live radio broadcasts and records but this was the first time I had seen him at work. He delivered finely rehearsed performances which made musical sense and were satisfying but just occasionally I wanted him to tell me something I didn't know about the music. The RPO responded to him with some fine playing, especially in the

Concerto where they did more than just accompany.
Not a total musical success, perhaps, but still an enjoyable night in the Concert Hall.

Bob Briggs

[Back to Top](#)

[Cumulative Index Page](#)

[OPERA REVIEWS](#)

[UK CONCERTS](#)

[INTERNATIONAL CONCERTS](#)

[ARTICLES AND NEWS](#)

[HOME](#)