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### James Tocco Recital Review

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is a review by Janet Glasgow of the University of Minnesota, Morris music faculty of the Performing Arts Series concert at UMM Feb. 10 by pianist James Tocco.

by Janet Glasgow  
Instructor of Music, UMM

MORRIS (2/13/76) -- On last Tuesday, internationally acclaimed concert pianist James Tocco presented his second recital of the UMM Performing Arts Series. Once again he performed before a standing room-only audience, and again received two standing ovations.

He established an immediate rapport with the audience, opening his program with the Suite No. 2 in F Major by Handel. Played with elegant clarity and style, Mr. Tocco's original ornamentation added much to the richness of the melodic lines. The Samuel Barber Piano Sonata concluded the first half of the program. A beautifully constructed work, it is ideally suited to Mr. Tocco, displaying his superb control of thematic material and tone color as well as his tremendous dynamic range.

The second half of the program began with four rather brief pieces by Franz Liszt, written near the end of his life. These extremely sensitive and introspective compositions held the capacity crowd spellbound by his control which allowed the many subtle nuances to shine through. The program was officially concluded with the brilliance and virtuosity of Chopin's Andante Spianato and Grande Polanaise, Op. 22. Even in such bravura music, Mr. Tocco's sensitivity was always the predominant characteristic.

The audience ovation brought him back to the piano for three encores of American music: Nocturne by Samuel Barber, Souvenir of Puerto Rico by L. M. Gottschalk, and Dance of the Witches by Edward MacDowell, three charming and witty pieces, beautifully and entertainingly performed.

It is indicative of Mr. Tocco's artistic integrity that he consistently chooses his programs for their musical content, rather than playing down to the audience as is so frequently found in recitals offered in the more remote regions of the country. Instead, he prefers to play a musically difficult program, taking the time to write his own program notes and say a few words about the music at the performance.

Mr. Tocco's other activities during his stay in Morris included a master class for UMM piano students, a luncheon with students, an impromptu performance of the Gershwin Piano Concerto and signing a great many autographs at the reception following the recital.

(more)

(Tocco review)

It is perhaps a little unusual for a friend and former student to review an artist's performance, but it has been my great pleasure to follow Mr. Tocco's career closely for a number of years. The reviewer has been constantly amazed by the musical growth and maturity that permeates his work and is evident from year to year. Last year's performance was grand, this year's was even better. I hope we can welcome him back for a third performance. I can assure you it will be still more phenomenal.

-UMM-

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