

Erie Philharmonic performs *Mediterranean Passion*

by Nadine Cross
collegian staff

The Erie Philharmonic performed an evening of Spanish music on Saturday, November 22, 1997 entitled "Mediterranean Passions." With Peter Bay conducting, the Philharmonic played Manuel de Falla's "Three Cornered Hat," Suite Nos. 1 and 2, Maurice Ravel's Rapsodie espagnole, and Joaquin Rodrigo's Concierto de Aranjuez for Guitar

and Orchestra. The special feature of the evening was world-renowned guitarist, Sharon Isbin assisting on the Rodrigo and de Falla pieces performed in the second part of the concert.

Previously a student of Bach specialist Rosalyn Tureck, Isbin has toured Europe annually since the age of seventeen. She has given performances at New York City's Carnegie Hall and Avery Fisher Hall as well as Washington

D.C.'s Kennedy Center and London's Barbican Centre and Wigmore Hall. She has also appeared with the Indianapolis Symphony, The St. Louis Symphony, and The London Symphony among others. Isbin currently is the Director of the Guitar Department (created by her in 1989) at the Juliard School of Music and at the Aspen Music Festival.

The Philharmonic did a fine job

with this performance, and the guitar pieces by Sharon were absolutely incredible. It was a unique experience to hear a guitar used in classical pieces instead of only rock or folk music where they can vary between sounding light and harsh or abrasive. I had grown up listening to electric and steel guitars in heavy metal, and it was delightful to hear guitars make such graceful sounds. Isbin's guitar performance was at times loud and dramatic but a t others

light and airy. At times she played deliberately and at other times her fingers just glanced across the strings, barely touching them. Her part of the performance was the most enjoyable because it gave the music a "Spanish" feel—kind of like one hears in the old Zorro movies, except much better. She made the performance a glorious spectacle with her dramatic facial expressions as she played, as well as with her festive metallic gold-colored pants and brightly-colored

vest.

The only disappointment of the evening was that the music itself was not quite as festive as I had expected that it would be. The many ads I saw for it described it as "Mediterranean Passion" and "A Night of Passion," so I expected lively music with the entire orchestra playing much of the time. While the guitar pieces were like this, the rest of the music was kind of quiet and reserved with only certain sections playing. I enjoyed all of the music, and it was all wonderfully performed; I just did not get what the advertisements had led me to expect.

Another disappointment to my experience was my seating. I sat behind a couple who was constantly kissing and talking—loudly. I believe that the environment has a lot to do with how much the event is appreciated, and this unfortunate predicament made it difficult for me to enjoy the performance. I could hear every word that the incredibly rude people in front of me were saying.

This Philharmonic concert was extremely well-performed with Sharon Isbin being the highlight of the evening. I am still amazed at the variety of music that she performed with a guitar and the skill with which she performed. While Ms. Isbin will not be back in Erie for awhile, I would advise picking up one of her many compact discs. Her music is an uniquely dramatic treatment of the guitar and a treat to hear.

Film review: *The Rainmaker*

by Jon Stubbs
collegian staff

Most John Grisham novels contain the same basic elements: the young and inexperienced lawyer, the impoverished family which he represents, and the well-known, high-priced lawyer which he opposes in court, all of which are blessed with an eloquent southern accent. *The Rainmaker* does not differ from the above formula, but that doesn't mean it's not entertaining.

Matt Damon stars as Rudy Baylor, a Memphis lawyer so fresh that he hasn't even taken his oath as a lawyer before he appears for his first court trial. He takes the case of a family suing an insurance company because they have repeatedly denied claims for the family's leukemia-stricken son.

One dissension from the normal Grisham recipe is that Baylor's sidekick is not of the opposite sex, but instead a short, bald guy, Deck Schiflet (appropriately portrayed by Danny DeVito). In a way, Schiflet is much like Baylor; despite being fifty-something, Schiflet has never passed the bar.

If there is one aspect of Grisham's work that outshines the rest, it's the

fact that he manages to incorporate realistic character development without sacrificing the plot development. This holds true for *The Rainmaker*. The audience follows Rudy Baylor through the tribulations of becoming a lawyer, the ethical debates he has with himself, and his experiences with his love interest in the film, Kelly Riker (Clare Danes). All of this is done with Rudy's voice-over narration, which can be overdramatic at times, but is more helpful than hurtful.

Grisham's immense talent for storytelling matched with director Francis Ford Coppola's genius for film makes for a good movie. Coppola, who has directed everything from *The Godfather* to *Jack* (starring Robin Williams) has proved once again that nothing lies beyond his skill for creating great movies.

Granted, John Grisham does have a template for his stories which he deviates little from novel to novel or from movie to movie, maybe more concretely than other modern novelists. However, judging from his past successes, it is obvious that he has created a following loyal to his work. Maybe it's okay to write methodically if you're this good. (****)

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