

## 15-year-old German violinist Elias David Moncado joins Newcastle Männerchor at St. John's, Youngstown (July 12)

by Robert Rollin



On Wednesday evening, July 12, Youngstown's St. John's Episcopal Church, in cooperation with Pennsylvania's Newcastle Eintracht Männerchor and WYSU-FM, played host to an unusual and outstanding event. Elias David Moncado, a fifteen-year-old violinist from Germany, was the headliner. Moncado's mother, Mooi Jieu, played the lion's share of the piano parts, and her husband Bernard, a conductor and chorus master, also

played piano and provided commentary.

Daniel E. Forsberg, director of the Männerchor, introduced each half of the concert and conducted the group in two short sets of men's chorus music that lent variety to the evening. Forsberg is also managing director of Platin Scala Pennsylvania/USA, the organization sponsoring the young violinist's American visit. The concert's main thrust was to showcase Moncado's remarkable skill as a performer. As one of the top young violinists in Europe, he would be expected to have exceptional technical prowess, but he also played with consummate expression and flair.

The evening's high points were the most sparkingly virtuosic works: Moncado's stunning performances of Camille Saint-Saëns' *Introduction et Rondo Capriccioso*, Op. 28 and Pablo de Sarasate's *Gypsy Airs (Zigeunerweisen)*, Op. 2. Because Saint-Saëns dedicated his piece to Sarasate, one of the great violin virtuosos of the era, it was nice to hear the two next to one another at the close of the evening.

Not only did Moncado rise to the technical challenges of the Saint-Saëns, he also played its more melancholic passages with remarkable eloquence. A wonderful rhythmic vitality was present in the fast passages, and pathos in the slower sections.

The Sarasate represents the pinnacle of difficult playing. Moncado's stratospheric high passages were immaculate, and the more lyric ones had great beauty. In short, he showed himself to be a mature artist of exceptional talent.

Moncado closed the first half with Eugene Ysaÿe's *Sonata for Violin Solo*, Op. 27, No. 3, one of his *Six Sonatas* that are among the most difficult in the solo repertoire. The young violinist was simply terrific here, dashing off the difficult passages effortlessly, bringing out the musical subtleties with passion and elegance, and receiving a standing ovation.

Moncado opened the concert with two fine works by Tchaikovsky. *Melodie*, Op. 42, No. 3, featured a wonderful soaring melodic line in the highest register, while *Valse Scherzo* Op. 34, is a technical show piece that displayed the violinist's great skill with multiple stops, and some lovely harmonics in the extreme high register. Mooie Jieu Moncado matched her son with sensitive and skillful piano playing here and throughout the evening.

In the middle of the first half, Bernard and Mooie Jieu Moncado presented a charming four-hand performance of *En Bateau*, the first movement of Debussy's *Petite Suite*. They brought out the dreamy, sensual atmosphere that had been inspired by Paul Verlaine's poem.

After intermission, Moncado played Massenet's famous "Meditation" from *Thaïs*, adorning the lovely melody with simplicity and grace. Though every violinist studies this work, he made it shimmer with a great beauty that was surprising for a young violinist. His encore, Elgar's *Salut d'amour*, sparkled as the violin and piano alternated phrases of the lyrical melody. Judging from this concert, American audiences should be hearing more from this talented young performer.

*Published on ClevelandClassical.com July 16, 2016.*

*Click here for a printable copy of this article*

[Return to the Front Page.](#)