CONCERT REVIEW

Program a three-dimensional gem

BY JANELLE GELFAND
The Cincinnati Enquirer

Sometimes the best kind of concert is one that impresses you when you least expect it.

That's what happened at Friday night's Cincinnati Symphony Orchestras program led by Jesus Lopez-Cobos in Music Hall. A stunning world premiere by Gunther Schuller, a knock-em-dead performance by pianist Christopher O'Reily, and a thrilling Also Sprach Zarathustra.

Schellberg's The Past is in the Present commissioned by the CBD for its centennial, which comes in the 1984-85 season. It was a fitting honor, the composer's many Cincinnati ties go back to 1944 when at 27, he was CBD's principal French hornist.

Dedicated to his late wife, the work dispels any thoughts that modern music is unemotional. Besides being well-crafted, it is deeply personal and tender.

The first movement had a pul-

Age hasn't slowed intensity of Rush

BY J.D. BRUEWER
Enquirer Contributed

There was a Rush at Riverfront Coliseum Friday night: The three-piece band from Toronto played before a sellout crowd of 10,500, the support of their 19th album, Counterparts.

Opening act Primus tried to warm up the crowd with a 3-minute set. This trio performed a mix of funky, Southwestern style, speed metal in a set that included their most recognizable songs, "Jitterbug" and "My Name Is Mud." For the most part, Primus performance was loud and pulsing. Primus fans enjoyed the set while Rush fans endured it.

The main event began with a video of a giant nut and bolt like the ones on the cover of Counterparts sitting in space above the Earth to the sound of "Fandare for the Common Man," before Rush launched into "On the Run.

For a band that's been together for 20 years, Rush sounded incredibly fresh and sharp. The band performed the songs exactly as they sound on the albums. The only concession to the band's three-dimensional gem

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“...quality, with interesting combinations of orchestral colors. Much of this peaceful quality carried over into the other three movements: the second was performed with fleeting moments of warm color in the strings. The percussion section summed up hair-raising effects in the climax of the third movement’s "Dies Irae," a choral for the dead. The mastery of the orchestra’s waves of sound washed upward and ebbed away with delicate glistening bells, tolling the final movement’s conclusion.

The composer’s traces were fan now’s from the audience of 1,784.

Rachmaninoff’s Concerto No. 1, Op. 1, which hasn’t been performed in more than a decade, was given a brilliant account by American pianist O’Reily. Compared with Rachmaninoff was a teenager and reborn much later, the work is not as well known as his other concertos.

Although there were erratic rhythms (causing, sometimes, incorrectness in the orchestra), O’Reily dashed off the bravura passages with his fingers and impressive technique, matching orchestral sonority decisively for the decibel.

In the virtuosity beauty in the simplicity of the second movement, playing with a lovely, resonant tone. Although the finale is a showpiece with plenty of flash, O’Reily didn’t walk on the wild side. He steadfastly emphasized clarity — and the unrestrained disappeared.

After intermission, Lopez-Cobos led a vivid, well-conceived reading of Richard Strauss’s Also Sprach Zarathustra. It was a spectacle of proach, which aimed for the seductive rather than the dramatic. Despite some intonation collisions in the winds, the work had forthright sonorities in the strings and wonderful scope.

The program repeats at 8 p.m. today. 381-3380.