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[...]

Really, though, the heart and meat of the program arrived in the middle, as dazzling-with-subtlety Macedonian pianist Simon Trpceski and the orchestra gave a strong, persuasive account of 20th century Russian great Prokofiev's friendly and gutsy Concerto No. 3.

As pianist Trpceski came onstage, he gestured up to the back of the Bowl, with its moon in celestial vigil behind the audience. The ambient stage was set for Prokofiev's alternately lyrical and salty-muscular score, opening with light, brisk amblings on the keyboard before sliding sideways into the more angular, Russian temper of the music. Trpceski is a remarkable pianist, smartly blending restraint, sense of tonal color and knowing when and how much to unleash bravado, in measured doses.

For a brief encore, Trpceski steered away from the Czech zone again with Macedonian composer Pande Shahov's "In Struga," its folk-like themes filtered through a few elbow jabs of Modernist thinking. The crowd, and the moon, approved.

(September 13, 2013)

[...]

The most notable aspect that Macedonian pianist Simon Trpceski and Gaffigan brought to Rachmaninoff's "Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini" — and it's a big one — was wit.

Very few would associate the quality of wit with this composer, but aside from the ingeniously rapturous 18th variation, the "Rhapsody" has it in spades, and Trpceski brought it out with his crisp, crystalline, lightly pedaled playing, as did Gaffigan in his brash, alert conducting. As a result, this piano concerto-in-all-but-name sounded fresh and alive.

(December 12, 2014)