

EXCERPTS FROM:

San Jose Mercury News

ENTERTAINMENT

November 8, 2014

insideBayArea

Review: Oakland East Bay Symphony opens season

By Richard Shienin

OAKLAND -- The Oakland East Bay Symphony opened its 26th season Friday at the Paramount Theatre with a program of the familiar and the unknown. On the podium was the man responsible: conductor Michael Morgan, who has been shaking up programs with this orchestra for a quarter century.

The Tchaikovsky was terrific, beginning with the clarinet's doleful "Fate" theme. What was striking, from the outset, was Morgan's calming way with this piece, whose familiar themes can easily be wrenched for pathos and drama. Morgan wasn't interested in that. His approach was clear and unruffled, allowing for an ebb and flow that somehow felt naturalistic, as if he were taking us on a leisurely trip with Tchaikovsky and the orchestra.

When dramatic moments emerged -- as in the second movement, where an insistent layering of plush strings followed the horn's song -- they were all the more effective. But it was the delicacy of the performance that really grabbed this listener. There was a quiet, hovering quality to that second movement, while the waltzing third movement felt feathery.



OAKLAND EAST BAY SYMPHONY Michael Morgan leads the Oakland East Bay Symphony Friday at the Paramount Theatre.

“[Michael Morgan] has been shaking up programs with this orchestra for a quarter century.”