Soloeist Bell awes with ASO at Symphony Hall

By Kenny Phillips
Staff Writer

Last Thursday and Friday at the Woodruff Arts Center's Symphony Hall, the opportunity came to immerse myself into the beautiful sounds of the Grammy award-winning Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. The ASO moved easily through the 1940's classical music of Copland, and Barber and Bartók to brighten the concert hall with a glorious performance featuring the violin soloist Joshua Bell. The performance opened with Copland’s Appalachian Spring, with the introduction of an instrument. The Pulitzer Prize-winning ballet suite fills the room. Appalachian Spring primes the audience, and the applause at its conclusion is only outmatched when Joshua Bell walks on stage. The light start of Samuel Barber’s Concerto for Violin and Orchestra moves gently letting Bell woo the audience with his Stradivarius. The third movement Presto in molto perpessus is where the masterful technique of Bell’s solos is spotlighted.

The performance’s intermission comes only after minutes of ovation. When the orchestra returns on stage, their shared smiles and convivial play excite me for the final piece – Béla Bartók’s Concerto for Orchestra. The concerto suddenly brightens with a festive mood immediately with the winds and strings making great tones that drive back the darkness from before. In the absolute quiet before the ending, the air seems to stir and the horn opens the finale dramatically. In a brief moment, the orchestra erupts beyond the previous convivial tone to des- cribing a spiritual elevation that only music can achieve. The orchestra moves gently letting Bell woo the audience with his Stradivarius. The third movement Presto is molto perpessus is where the masterful technique of Bell’s solos is spotlighted.

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are down and real to match the worn, “been there, done that” quality of Brown’s voice. However, his voice fails to be soft, and it only sounds thin and frail, never delicate.

Where he really succeeds is in the fist-pumping anthems that all the songs tend to become, which would be a bad thing if they did not pull it off as well as they do. That said, a little diversity would have been appreciated because at first listen all ten radio-ready jams blend together.

There are really only three instruments (guitar, bass and drums) on the whole album, but that is all The Modern Society needs to rock out. They combine their instruments and their voices in a distinctly Southern, devil-may-care style that dares you to stay sitting. The crashing drums and driving guitars command you to get up and party.

Perhaps the weakest aspect of the album is the lyrical content. They are mostly all about being young and restless. “I’ll carry you a thousand miles and never leave this room” does not really make much sense, but perhaps I am too literal-minded. The lyrics do rise above and beyond on occasion and become quite evocative.

The Modern Society is not for everyone, and you probably know who you are. You will probably like The Modern Society of you like classic rock, 30 Seconds to Mars (without the drama), Trapt (without as much intensity), Phantom Planet or new Panic at the Disco.

The Beat Goes On does not have a ballad or other slow song; they are all fast-paced party songs.

By the time the frat house-ready album has finished, a couple of songs stick out among the rest. “Tokyo” is quite catchy with a longing chorus and a breakdown in Japanese. Brown calls out for the girl of his dreams, even if she is as far away as Tokyo, to come to him. It is strangely lonely yet hopeful.

“Mona Lisa” closes out the album in frustration and a cry for battle. Brown croons to his personal Mona Lisa (whom he apparently lost) to whom he wants to prove himself somehow. It repeats and crescendos to quite an anticlimax, reflecting how little he actually has to show.

“If you could see me again, I would… If you could see me now, then you would see. Yeah, so there.” Sounds like pure infatuation to me.

Overall, The Modern Society is a local band on steroids. They are louder, harder and better. They rock out and take no prisoners. For a full-on, straight-up rockin’ time, look no further.

The Modern Society sounds different than today’s pop, which are louder, harder and better. They rock out and take no prisoners. For a full-on, straight-up rockin’ time, look no further.

The Modern Society has all the makings to rock radio back to its senses.

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The Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro Summer Program

12 May – 19 June 2009

Soccer, Culture, and Politics in Argentina and Brazil

The Sam Nunn School of International Affairs at the Georgia Institute of Technology announces the Summer 2009 Program in Soccer, Culture, and Politics in Argentina and Brazil. This innovative program explores two of the most exciting cities in the world, Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro, and uses soccer as a lens to examine and understand politics, history, culture, economics, and identity formation in the region.

This is a very popular program, and is limited to twenty participants. Students from all universities are welcome.

For all of the details, please visit http://web.me.com/kirkbowman/ArgBraz09

If you have questions, please contact the program director, Dr. Kirk Bowman, at kbowman@gatech.edu.

Information Session:
Tuesday, November 18th
Student Center, Room 359, 11AM
Fallout masterfully mixes RPG and action

By Hamza Hasan  
Staff Writer

As a first-person shooter, Fallout 3 is a success, but only moderately. Fulfilling its demand as a role-playing game, Fallout once again succeeds. The interesting part is when the mediocrity of both these genres is put together, the game becomes more than the sum of its parts. If Fallout 3 were strictly a shooter, it would have interesting yet disenfranchising features. The most obvious problem is the damage system in the combat, where guns feel like they do more damage than they really do. Thus, the gunplay, and strictly the use of guns alone, can feel very clunky and even contrived because of how slowly it’s paced. Very few people should expect the game to replace Call of Duty of Halo.

As an RPG, Fallout is difficult to enjoy having already played Oblivion, as both were created by the same developer, Bethesda Studios. The engine is extremely similar with its item storage, quest infrastructure and even certain elements of level design very comparable to those of Elder Scrolls IV. Once again, it is unfair to simply take Fallout 3 as an RPG alone; since that is not its intent, it can be seen more as an FPS and an RPG, it truly works to become both, and as an FPS/RPG, it’s a must-have for anyone looking for less of the same and something truly unique.

Though the engine is very reminiscent of Oblivion, at the same time, the visual design, accompanied by much cleaner and more believable textures and graphical integrity, Fallout 3 includes a truly unique art direction. The setting of the game is post-apocalyptic Earth, but more specifically, the Washington D.C. area. The interesting feature of the environment is that D.C. is the same as it was up until the 1950’s, when the nuclear wars began. Though it’s been several hundred years since, the culture has not greatly evolved from a utopian, Pleasantville-esque scene, with characters who favor good hair gel as much as the very scarce clean water.

The story is engaging, though because the environments are more limiting than Oblivion, the story is much more linear as well. The open-worldly feel is not as apparent, and part of it is because the danger of the “Wastelands,” the vast expansive region that encompasses the game (much like Cyrodiil in TES IV), the character development and the attitudes of people are extremely believable, and though the character progression is not huge, the ability for the user to change the world—for better or for worse—is stupefying. In short, Fallout 3 is epic.

The most useful, fun and vicious feature of gameplay is the Vault-Tec Assisted Targeting System (V.A.T.S.). It’s like a slow-motion Burst Death Mode take on shooting. You can see where a shot is nearby, pressing a button turns on the system which indefinitely pauses the game, and the gamer can choose what part to shoot on which person. With several enemies of various styles, shooting the arms on one and the head on another isn’t a bad plan, and V.A.T.S becomes this limitless, yet powerful gameplay element that allows the user to be creative and violent at the same time, a la Quentin Tarantino. As the character levels up, or he/she can choose various upgrades to allow more action points, which limit how many shots a person can pull off in V.A.T.S mode. In this sense, V.A.T.S is a replacement for magic in Oblivion.

Even without V.A.T.S., Fallout’s shooting is fun. Body parts blow off with grenades and expert shots, and there’s even a cannon that shoots all sorts of objects from ashtrays to bottles to actual ammunition. The variety of guns, plus the ability to make one’s own, makes gun combat in Fallout more realistic in terms of gun usage—guns break down, get repaired and get upgraded. If there’s one thing that Bethesda repeated with Fallout from Oblivion, it’s the limitless options with combat. Though guns are important for survival, the game also employs strong use of blunt weapons, from a baseball bat to a grim sledgehammer. There is not only health anymore, but also radiation poisoning, which is easier to avoid than expected. Other features include damage of one’s own body parts, customization of armor and a huge experience and leveling system as in depth as any other RPG.

It’s impossible to sum up Fallout 3 in a few words because of how much the game undertakes and the unbelievably realistic environment. The game is so much more than the sum of its parts, and because Bethesda decided to do something very few developers even attempt—much less succeed at—the game is a milestone in RPG. As the character levels up, the character development and the attitudes of people are extremely believable, and though the character progression is not huge, the ability for the user to change the world—for better or for worse—is stupefying. In short, Fallout 3 is epic.

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Revolution turns postmodernism upside down

By Richard Otis
Staff Writer

Mark Z. Danielewski has gained quite the cult following of fans in recent years. One might even say he’s become a rock star of the literary world.

Danielewski’s claim to fame is when he left English majors cringing and postmodernists cheering with the 2000 publication of House of Leaves, a Pynchonesque behemoth of a horror novel. Postmodernists love to experiment with style and structure in their work, and Danielewski’s literary debut is a masterpiece of experimental fiction.

In a nutshell, the book is a literary discussion of a Blair Witch-style movie called The Navidson Record. The film was produced by a world-renowned filmmaker named Will Navidson, and it purported to show supernatural instances of a house that is larger than the inside on the outside. The plot sounds straightforward enough, until you discover the word ‘fictional’ is muddled as the reader attempts to sort out the imagined.

In many ways, House of Leaves serves as its own literary criticism. Concepts like truth and reality are often discussed in the novel itself, and Danielewski repeatedly questions his own sanity in footnotes that sometimes go on for several pages. The very meaning of the word “fictional” is muddled as the reader attempts to sort out the “real” portions of the novel from the imagined.

Truant, as he delves deeper into The Navidson Record, begins to lose his tenuous grip on reality. The unnamed “editors” of House of Leaves include appendices to Truant’s edited version of Zampanò’s manuscript that provide hints to Truant’s tumultuous childhood.

The book itself is a proverbial puzzle wrapped up in an enigma. For example, every instance of the word “house” is written in blue. Danielewski has stated that it’s an allusion to the blue-screen technology that allows any background to be superimposed over a blue screen. Similarly, the things that the characters experience when they enter the mysterious Navidson house are projections of their own inner demons.

House of Leaves is a story that contains enough substance to be fodder for decades of academic discussion, but if it’s a novel that exists in a bubble, Danielewski’s second major work, Only Revolutions, exists to be cross-referenced and contextualized.

Published in 2006, the novel is a love story and road novel about a fictional parallel universe. The unnamed “editors” of House of Leaves include appendices to Truant’s edited version of Zampanò’s manuscript that provide hints to Truant’s tumultuous childhood.

The novel is written in two sections, each 180 pages long. One section tells the story from Sam’s point of view, the other from Hailey’s. The novel is designed, as hinted by the title, to be cyclical. It’s possible, according to Danielewski, to read the “end” and then continue reading from the beginning. The length of the sections represents the 180 degrees the reader must turn the book in order to go from Hailey’s version of the text to Sam’s version.

Sam and Hailey narrate with eratic poetry filled with misspellings often couched in double meaning and historical relevance. Danielewski filled the novel with references to the time period Sam and Hailey are “passing through,” and dates are sequentially listed on every page along with a smattering of relevant names, events and quotes.

The story, and its ending, is simple and predictable when stripped of its presentation. What Danielewski has created with Only Revolutions, though, is a postmodern love story that examines love and emotion the way House of Leaves examined fear and reality. Danielewski allows for an exploration of what it means to love, but from a new perspective.

Nevertheless, reading the novel will leave one with a sense of lingering familiarity, as if the story is merely conjuring up dormant memories of people and places long since gone. Perhaps that’s why, in the dedication, it’s written, “You were there.” All of us, we were there.
Piled Higher & Deeper by Jorge Cham

Non Sequitur by Wiley

Crossword Solution from Page 21

BRAT MASC PARA DESOTO
BAKU ANOS ONUS EITHER
CHARLES DICKENS TEASES
FINES HEMIN HIT
ABC VAL SIMON GROUCHO
LULLED SULON PLO SHOP
CLASS CELINE DION ANI
ABUT MALT ROBE WREN
PAD DETAIL SITE VALSE
PREHEAT ESTER RELETS
DIARY MATER GAELS
SIERRA PACER AMADIO
ABBES SUCH NEARBY ADD
DEUS AERY MIRO TROD
IRS CARSONDALY BOWIE
SISI RRS PARIS RAPIDS
MAYDAYS METAL SAL NOT
ELL SUNUP SENSE
SOMALI CLARENCE DARRROW
ENBLOC ALIA ROTO NEAP
TOASTS MARL ATOM ETTA
**Non Sequitur by Wiley**

So why aren't you writing your book?

I think I've got writer's block. I don't know where to start.

I think it makes sense.

I'm pretty sure it's going to be your job.

**Dilbert® by Scott Adams**

Our robots went bad. They're on a murderous rampage.

I'll take care of it.

Hey, Alice. Guess who says your hair is unfashionable and you're overpaid?

Little help, please. My fist of death is stuck.

Tell me an interesting story.

Our spam filter became self-aware and ordered us to build an army of killer robots. My coworker, Alice, punched them all to death.

I'm not even in that story.

I modified the dress code to require wearing company shirts on casual Fridays.

That should lower our employees' self-esteem until they stop complaining about earning less than the industry average.

Why do I feel overpaid today?

I don't think I have your full attention.

It's Asok's turn to listen if you say anything useful. He'll send us an instant message.

He's asleep. He's employing heuristics.

Catbert: Evil Director of Human Resources

Laptops are banned from all meetings.

The only things that should be in your mind during meetings are soul-crushing boredom and a futility headache.

That's more like it.

I want to be productive, but the Internet is calling to me.

Hey, buddy. I've got pictures of gadgets.

Cool ones? Sure, let's pretend that matters.