

Mexican brass quintet and symphony: A joyous combination

By Pierre Kenyon

The "Metales M5" brass quintet from Mexico and the Pueblo Symphony provided a joyous concert Saturday night for an audience at Hoag Hall on the campus of Colorado State University-Pueblo.

I say joyous because a brass ensemble provokes such a response, perhaps, somewhere between inspiration, jollity and fanfare. Happily, the five brass players in Metales M5 fill the bill with a modicum of charm and some raucous humor as well.

Although the concert was billed as "Symphony for Kids," the older kids like you and me enjoyed the concert just as much or more.

It may be of interest to explain why this group calls itself Metales M5. It is simply because there are five instrumentalists who hail from the city of Morelia in the state of Michoacán in Mexico; and they play *metales*, meaning brass, with which they provide music. *À Comprendre?*

The five instrumentalists in Metales M5 include their leader, Alexander Freund, trumpet; Oscar Villegas, trumpet; Juan Carlos Quiterio Miguel, French horn; Fernando Islas Melendez, trombone; and José Lopez Juarez, tuba.

My first encounter with Metales M5 was in the gymnasium at Morton Elementary School, here in town, where these fine brass players tooted their horns for a large group of kids who showed their appreciation by shouting and clapping thunderously.

That was the first stop on a round of school visits last week when they performed for a number of students. Response from the large audience at Hoag Hall during the concert Saturday night was a bit more restrained but nonetheless enthusiastic.

To start the festivities, the M5 gentlemen entered Hoag Hall through the rear doors, playing as they walked down the aisles onto the stage; no mean feat, that got everyone's attention. The program was appropriately eclectic in that it drew on pieces from the Baroque period, to a Concerto-M5 for Brass Quintet and Orchestra, and the "Indiana Jones March." Amid a fine display of exceptional virtuosity in their playing, an element of humor injected into the proceedings which the audience enjoyed.

After the intermission, following some Dixieland tunes, the M5 and the orchestra joined efforts to produce excellent renditions of "Granada," "La Virgen de la Macarena" (which included a mock bullfight) and a well-known tango, "La Cumparsita."

The tango number got a little raucous as the leader, Alexander Freund, donned dress and wig and romped across the stage with a fellow M5 colleague. This was pretty funny stuff which the kids in the audience delighted in. Of course, I thought it was just a bit undignified; tsk, tsk. Interspersed with the foregoing, the quintet played a smooth version of Gershwin's "Summertime" from "Porgy and Bess" and a beer hall song from Munich which included a lot of oompahs.

The last piece on the program was a work indigenous to the home state of the M5 called "Linda Michoacán," a folk tune, no doubt dear to their hearts.

There were two encores and two standing ovations showing that the Metales M5 were a big hit here in Pueblo.

We hope they will come back for a return engagement soon.