The Niagara Symphony Orchestra Presents “The Nutcracker”

Sitting down for a couple of hours and listening to live music being performed in front of you by a symphony orchestra isn’t as popular of an activity as it may have been in the past, but the experience is one that all should receive once, even if it may not be their cup of tea. The Niagara Symphony Orchestra’s is a wonderful reminder of this, simply by executing a magical version of Tchaikovsky’s *The Nutcracker* that gained a standing ovation from spectators.

Many are familiar with the story of *The Nutcracker* as it is a Christmas classic that has been turned into many movies. The story was quite comprehensible thanks to the narrator who guided the audience through the performance in a comfortable looking chair and his book in hand. He was able to create an atmosphere before the music even started, and with his assistance it was much easier to decipher where in the tale the music has progressed to, along with giving words to picture the settings of the story. Unfortunately, his mic would sometimes turn on a bit after he started speaking which would cut the beginning of some of his queues off, but if he heard, it didn’t appear to phase him and he continued to deliver his lines gracefully.

Those who have a passion for music would be delighted to witness the different sections listening to and interacting with each other, moving effortlessly through the music without error. With the amount of string performers there were, it was pleasantly surprising to hear the brass and woodwinds clearly. There were even sections where some lesser known instruments such as the bassoon, oboe, and bass clarinet were very obviously noticeable, which from a high schooler’s experience is incredibly uncommon and was really interesting! Cudos as well to the Chorus Niagara Children’s Choir, who assisted in performing the piece “Waltz of the Snowflakes” with the orchestra, it certainly added a nice element to the experience.

In spite of listening to an orchestra performing being a dominantly auditory experience, there was also many visual stimulants such as lighting that changes with the different pieces to display the intended atmosphere, as well as beautiful live sand art by Moran Arbuthnot on a projector screen above the orchestra. The sand art displays some of the scenes within *The Nutcracker*, giving a visual component that helps amplify the magic of the performance that likely wouldn’t be seen in many other orchestral performances.

Another visual component that would be incredibly hard to ignore was the conductor, Bradly Thachuck. His movements to queue the different sections were quite hard to decipher, but honestly it was fun to try and do so. It is evident that he is fully committed to and enraptured
with the music, and it is infectious! He leads the orchestra with so much passion, you can’t help but feel his enthusiasm yourself, which requires a lot of passion and skill.

The Niagara Symphony Orchestra’s performance of The Nutcracker is a wonderful holiday experience for both those who are new to the orchestra scene and those who have seen many classical performances. The visual twists were refreshing, and offered for a unique and magical time that is enjoyable for all ages.