

The Arts

## **Stunning concert by Polish guitarist**



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"Incredible" is a word used far too frequently these days, with the result that it has lost much of its original impact and has come to signify merely something good rather than something unbelievable.

Polish guitarist and German resident Marcin Dylla restored the meaning of the word Saturday in an absolutely stunning concert, the final event in GuitarSarasota's current season. Judging by the total silence of the audience before the eruption of thunderous applause

after each item on the program, "incredible" was back to its original strength in the handsome and acoustically rich hall at St. Paul Lutheran Church.

Large-scale, challenging compositions for solo guitar are not heard often in our city, certainly not performed at this level of seemingly effortless technique and intense artistry.

Manuel Ponce's "Sonata Romantica" -- an homage to Franz Schubert -- was alternately gnarly and sweet, rhythmically charged and lyrically relaxed, never simple, always surprising. Contemporary British composer Nicolas Maw, no slouch at doing gnarly himself, was represented by "Music of Memory," a suite of mostly nontonal meditations built around a lyrical theme from a Mendelssohn string quartet that made several calming appearances during the piece.

These two compositions, the first part of the program, made it clear from the outset that we were hearing a major talent performing music of serious proportions with both impressive technique and deeply musical interpretive skill.

After intermission, Dylla played 19th century Italian composer Mauro Giuliani's "Rossiniana No. 1" with consummate elegance and dazzling accuracy, followed by an unfamiliar work by a Polish composer of the 20th century, Aleksander Tansman. His "Variations on a Theme by Scriabin" combined a post-Debussy dreaminess with challenging passage-work of great complexity. Neither seemed to faze the guitarist.

The program closed with "Three Spanish Pieces" by Joaquin Rodrigo, whose "Concierto de Aranjuez" has become a cornerstone of the guitar and orchestral repertoire. This performance was touching in its lyricism and, well, incredible in its technical prowess.