



## Strumming the soul...

Rui Lobo | Panaji

Connoisseurs of western classical music were treated to a superlative guitar recital by Italian born Alessio Nebiolo recently. The concert was delayed by nearly an hour due to unforeseen circumstances, but the diehard lovers of classical music and in particular, of the guitar were more than rewarded by this extraordinary artist, whose impressive credentials include many prizes at international competitions.

Right from the beginning, Nebiolo's technical and artistic wizardry became evident in Suite Espanola by Gaspar Sanz. The Latin character of the Renaissance period suite was projected, not only by the sound but by the intense involvement and the body language of the artist. It was a classic example of visually hearing the music. Gaspar Sanz's pianissimo and gradual crescendo to a shattering climax with full-bodied rasgados strokes, made the guitar sound like an orchestra, with all its delicate nuances and very well thought out orchestral effects.



The Romanza and Andantino Variato was a virtuosic showpiece demonstrating, a la Paganini, impeccable technique and speed. It was admirable how Nebiolo managed different mixed strokes of apoyando and tirando at this tempo.

The airconditioning in the Black Box Hall of Kala Academy could not cope with the intensity of the music making; so the friendly artist knocked off his tuxedo and started the second half consisting of modern and contemporary works, with a verbal introduction of the pieces which greatly helped the audience to appreciate them.

Johann Jakob Froberger's Tombeau is a tribute on the death of Mr. Blancheroche and was played in true elegiac form with the typical metric irregularity, bringing out the lament, consolation and finally praise.

The Jazz Sonata by Dusan Bogdanovic, a well respected composer and one of Nebiolo's own teachers, had techniques that went much beyond the classical guitar and the baroque guitar. A blend of Jazz, classical and popular guitar, it had many places where just an outline was notated and the rest was left to be improvised by the guitarist. Here too, he left the audience wondering what more magic could one conjure on this simple instrument.

Argentinian composer Alberto Ginastera's Sonata Op. 47 is his only composition for guitar. The four movements Esordio, Scherzo, Canto and Finale, stretched the idiom of the guitar even further using tapping, percussive effects and xylophonic effects. Nebiolo's performance was characterized by sheer energy. Contrasting textures in the Scherzo were juxtaposed with relentless rhythmic patterns. In the finale, Nebiolo did full justice to the composer's directions for 'sforzatisissimo', 'frenetico' and 'delirante' to create a dizzy climax.

Only vigour of his youth, at barely 30, could explain how he had any energy left to perform an encore after this intense sonata. His rendition of Villa-Lobos' Study No. 11 seemed a little tame after such fiery music. Hearing Alessio Nebiolo one could not help feel that the guitar has come a long way since the days of Andres Segovia.

The organization Pro-Musica is to be greatly commended when it brings artists of such high calibre to Goa. This concert was digitally video taped and will serve valuable pedagogic interests for teachers and students of music.