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## Guitarist Is 1-Man String Section With Orchestra

TAMPA - Andres Segovia once described the classical guitar as an orchestra seen through the wrong end of a telescope. Friday night at the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center, Jason Vieaux gave it plenty of focus.

In his debut with The Florida Orchestra, the 34-year-old virtuoso offered a fresh take on a seldom-heard gem of the repertoire, the Guitar Concerto of the Brazilian master Heitor Villa-Lobos.

Joined by Madrid-born guest conductor Pedro Halffter at the podium, Vieaux showed why he is among the most talented guitarists of his generation, a player whose effortless technique and fluidity gave the concerto a singing voice.

The guitar is a paradoxical concert instrument. Despite its pop appeal since the 1950s - and its polyphonic features - it has been slow to evolve alongside the orchestra, with only three or four works played on a regular basis.

Vieaux created a miniature sound world on six strings, capturing the rhythmic vitality of the outer movements and the rhapsodic mood of the andantino. As Vieaux deftly made his way through the cadenza, the musicians around him leaned forward, admiring his dexterity and purity of tone.

The evening opened with the Interlude and Dance from Manuel de Falla's flawed opera, "La Vida Breve" ("The Short Life"), Halffter urging on the orchestra with a concise, physical conducting style that brought out the music's simmering Spanish moods.

Hector Berlioz's "Symphonie Fantastique" dominated the second half, a pivotal work of musical romanticism that depicts an artist, high on opium, in despair over a hopeless love. Berlioz connects its five sections with a recurring motif called the idee fixe, which the orchestra tossed around in different instrumental guises.

A highlight was the swaggering waltz of "The Ball," Katherine Young's eloquent oboe solo in the "Scene in the Country," and the pounding kettledrums in the "March to the Scaffold." Although the orchestra offered moments of demonic intensity, the strings lacked the energy - and presence - to make this a truly fantastic symphony.

Kurt Loft