

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Co-Cathedral organ reigns on high

By CHARLES WARD

Martin Pasi's new pipe organ at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart aced its key test in David Higgs' inaugural recital Friday: At full throttle it sounded like the mighty "king of instruments" one expects to find in a cathedral.

was that, as a whole, the sound seemed a bit safe. Still, Opus XIX should please Co-Cathedral officials. It will be a strong leader in worship, whether normal services or the pomp-filled spectacles when Cardinal DiNardo celebrates Mass.

was reinforced in Cesar Franch's Piece Heroique and, from Germany, Julius Reubke's tone poem Psalm 94. These pieces are so difficult they can cause organists to battle with the instrument, but the live video of Higgs at the console in the balcony showed the capacity audience his great skill.

opens and closes shutters that change dynamics for a portion of the organ. And, the organist must know, without looking, where the toe stud, or piston, is when he needs to change sounds and his hands are too busy. To show off an organ, dedicatory recitals explore music from several periods. Earlier French music — the "French classic" — was represented by a Noel of the 18th-century Louis Claude Daquin. Here, Higgs explored the reeds in detail — other stops with names like cromorne clarinette and trompette. He combined these into a gentle, rollicking account of a delightful set of variations on a French Christmas tune.

reeds — and that is the root of my reservation about Opus XIX. Instead of showing a personality with bite and swagger, it was content with being a bit conservative, as if echoing the conservative architecture and art in the co-cathedral. The mandatory J.S.Bach work was his Passacaglia, a set of variations over a pedal melody, capped with a brilliant fugue. Here, Opus XIX was capable but lacked the special fizz of a true Baroque organ. Sigfrid Kart-Elert's Harmonies du Soir was a quiet, atmospheric interlude. Arvo Part's Annun per Annum showed that new music sounds well on Opus XIX. The Co-Cathedral has scheduled many chances to hear Opus XIX. The next big one is the Oct. 29 recital by Philippe Lefebvre of Paris' Notre Dame Cathedral.

Social Network still No. 1

BOX OFFICE

- Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Hollywood.com: 1. The Social Network, \$15.5 million 2. Life as We Know It, \$14.6 million 3. Secretariat, \$12.6 million 4. Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga'Hoole, \$7 million 5. My Soul to Take, \$6.9 million 6. The Town, \$6.4 million 7. Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps, \$4.6 million 8. Easy A, \$4.2 million 9. Case 39, \$2.6 million 10. You Again, \$2.5 million

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FUENTES: Writer's works give Mexico a voice

CONTINUED FROM PAGE D1 lot as a child, shuttling between different languages and locations. After studying law, he entered the diplomatic service and served as director of international cultural relations for the Ministry of Exterior Relations. In his spare time, he wrote. With the publication of Terra Nostra in 1975 — a broad-stroke work on Spanish and Latin American history — his popularity soared and the Mexican government took note, asking him to serve as ambassador to France. He held the post from 1975 to 1977. Then Fuentes began to write full time. To date, he has written more than 25 books. Fuentes comes to Houston in association with the Consulate General of Mexico and with support from the Mexico Tourism

APPEARANCE Carlos Fuentes appears in Houston tonight. Where: Hubbard Stage, Alley Theatre, 615 Texas. When: 7:30 p.m. (doors open 6:45 p.m.). Tickets: \$5 general admission. Books: for sale on site from Brazos Bookstore. Information: 713-521-2026 or go to inprinhouston.org

wrote via e-mail. "Thanks to Fuentes's publications, modern Mexico emerged to the rest of the world ... accompanied by all the conflicts and tensions that are embodied in any other modern society." Fuentes's visit coincides with a yearlong celebration of Mexican history: 2010 marks the centennial of the Mexican Revolution and the bicentennial of Mexico's independence from Spain. In one way or another, all of Fuentes's work is steeped in the past. An early book, The Death of Artemio Cruz (1962), traces a life in flashbacks, as a young hero of the Mexican Revolution grows into an old, unscrupulous land baron and newspaper magnate. The Old Gringo (1985) follows the final days of an American writer living among Pancho Villa's sol-

diers during the Mexican Revolution. The Buried Mirror (1999), an art book, examines the relationship between Spain and Latin America, "from the caves of Altamira to the graffiti in East Los Angeles." If Fuentes were a 19th-century writer, he might have been a historian rather than a novelist, Zamora says. "He's not primarily a psychological novelist. He wants to inform his reader about Mexican realities." Fuentes has earned numerous awards and honors, among them the Miguel de Cervantes Prize, the top literary prize in the Spanish-speaking world. Still, some critics take issue with his style. His literary characters have been called wooden and likened to the people depicted in Diego Rivera's murals: frescoes set in cement. Yet no one can argue with the fact that Mexico

is his constant protagonist. And that his work celebrates the mixing of cultures and races in Latin America, or what Fuentes calls "flagrant syncretism." He sees this in his own country's history, from the festive ornamentation of centuries-old Baroque churches to the 1910 Revolution that overturned the feudal land system that enforced racism. Fuentes credits his grandmothers — one from Veracruz on Mexico's Gulf Coast and the other from Mazatlán on the Pacific Coast — with his love of history and storytelling. As he told the Academy of Achievement in a recent interview: "They had the whole storehouse of the past in their heads and their hearts." maggie.galehouse@chron.com

LOOKING BACK

In 1910, Theodore Roosevelt became the first former U.S. president to fly in an airplane during a visit to St. Louis, Mo.

BIRTHDAYS

Author Elmore Leonard is 85. Actor David Morse is 57. Actress Joan Cusack is 48. Actor Sean Patrick Flanery is 45. Actor Luke Perry is 44. Actress Jane Krakowski is 42. Rapper U-God (Wu-Tang Clan) is 40. Rapper MC Lyte is 39. Actress Emily Deschanel is 34. Actress Michelle Trachtenberg is 25.

JOKES ON US

Q: Where do most werewolves live? A: In Howllywood. - CHUCK WELCH, Houston

TV TONIGHT

Table with columns for time slots (5 PM, 5:30, 6 PM, 6:30, 7 PM, 7:30, 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30) and rows for various TV channels (NBC, PBS, CBS, ABC, TBN, MyTV, KLTJ, FOX, CW, Uni, Tel, 49ION, KNWS, KTBU, KUBE, KZJL, TF, ABCFAM, A&E, AMC, ANPL, BBC, BET, BRAVO, COM, DISC, DISN, E!, ENC, ESPN, ESPN2, FOOD, FSN, FX, HALL, HBO, HGTV, HIST, LIFE, MAX, MTV, NGE0, NICK, OXY, SHO, SPIKE, STARZ, SUNZ, SYFY, TBS, TCM, TLC, TMC, TNT, TOON, TRAV, TRUTV, USA, VH1, WE, WGN) listing their respective programs.