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		POSITION

# Stand-in pianist shines

By **NADIA BOBAK**  
Ottawa Sun

Poor health prevented Arcadi Volodos from performing with the National Arts Centre Orchestra Wednesday evening.

His replacement, Alex Slobodyanik, 23, tackled the bravura concerto instead.

Tchaikovsky's famous *Piano Concerto No. 1* in B-flat minor, which risks being dangerously offensive for its dripping romanticism if not approached with maturity, was impressive for Slobodyanik's sheer enthusiasm and the seriousness with which he approached the worn out, late century "tune."

It will be interesting to see what he does with the sobbing, melodramatic concerto 10 years from now.

The true splendour of the

evening, however, was a work written by Peter Paul Koprowski.

The Polish-born Canadian, who was in the audience last night and received a standing ovation after the work was performed, is a true gift to this country's musical talent.

The brilliant work written for strings only was commissioned by the CBC for the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra and was first performed in 1994 by conductor Mario Bernardi, who conducted last night's concert as well.

The work is comprised of one movement, and as the program details, is a tribute to Koprowski's late father who loved the waltz and poked fun at Koprowski as a young boy for his serious-

ness.

When Koprowski's father died, the work was transformed into a reflection of

the composer's emotional journey through bereavement, and as Koprowski puts it, "It mirrored the short time during which I learned the value of optimism

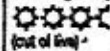
on the shadow of grief and regret."

The concert finished nicely with Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 2* in C minor.

The NAC Orchestra, who were in fine form, did justice to the diverse and ever-changing moods and themes of the symphony and left a particularly lasting impression with its finale.

## Review

NAC Orchestra with Mario Bernardi conducting and Alex Slobodyanik, piano



(out of five)