

Marvin Hamlisch at the Movies

by Rita Kohn, *Nuvo*, Indy's Alternative Voice
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Marsh Symphony on the Prairie, June 25-26

4 stars

Marvin Hamlisch, conducting and at the piano, again charmed during this promised return to the ISO with a program honoring other composers and sharing his own original scores, songs and adaptations. He's like everyone's favorite uncle, noticing (and quipping about) everything that's going on. His seemingly impromptu medley honoring sponsors made us chuckle. For an outsider, he had it pegged precisely. He's "right on" as a conductor, as someone nearby on the grassy knoll remarked, with medleys and theme songs from films everyone connects with, while highlighting the virtuosity of ISO players.

The audience particularly applauded ISO's own Mike Runyan for the lyrically sensitive harmonica adaptation of John Williams' Main Theme from *Schindler's List*. Concertmaster Zach De Pue joined Runyan and Hamlisch, at the piano, for a foot-stomping "New River Gorge."

Particularly notable were arrangements for George Gershwin's "An American in Paris" and Scott Joplin's "Ragtime Medley." "A Chorus Line Overture" closed the program, with "Over the Rainbow" as the encore. When Hamlisch noticed a young girl wearing a hat dancing near the stage and learned it was her birthday, he (with ISO players jamming along) delivered happy birthday as it might have been played by Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and a 21st century composer.

He's delightfully down home in every way.