

Michael Palmer *conductor*

Excerpts from selected reviews in U.S. media, garnered over a lifetime of critical acclaim:

Respighi's "*Trittico Botticelliano*" ... was given a lively reading, full of color and shadings and pinpoint accuracy. Mendelssohn's "Reformation" Symphony ended the concert. ... the performance was a vivid one, with brisk tempos and expressive breadth.

—R. M. Campbell, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Tuesday, 10 August 2004

Michael Palmer led [Schumann's "*Manfred*"] overture, and the two concerto works that followed it, with a good ear for balances and an infectious enthusiasm that obviously communicated to the [American Sinfonietta] musicians.

—Melinda Bargreen, *Seattle Times*, 14 August 2001

[In Dvorak's *Symphony No. 9*] ...the sound was unified and bold and the rhythmic punctuations crackled like cannon fire.

Maestro Palmer's interpretation of the famous *Largo* movement was especially poetic and seemed to have the audience's enraptured attention. ...

Bravo Maestro Palmer and the American Sinfonietta!

—Frederick Frahm, *Bellingham Herald*, 31 July 2001

[The New Haven Symphony's Carnegie Hall] concert on Friday evening was a happy surprise. Under its music director, Michael Palmer, it sounded for the most part like a big-league band, at home in a big-league setting.

—James Oestreich, *New York Times*, 25 January 1994

[Palmer] leads with a strong, decisive beat, and knows how to get what he wants from his musicians. His range was indicated by the diversity of the program... It ran the gamut from classical to contemporary ... with convincing authority.

Especially in the Hindemith [*Mathis der Maler*], with the bold counterpoint and vivid pictorial quality, he created marvelous tone colors with the [Indianapolis Symphony] orchestra. He also found a proper expression for the mysticism, the feeling of religious intensity, that lies deep in Hindemith's polyphonic writing.

—Corbin Patrick, *Indianapolis Star*, 13 December 1980

Indianapolis native Michael Palmer provided a program both masterful in its plan and in its execution for his conducting debut with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra.

Palmer brought the orchestra ... to a crisp edge of clarity and perfection for the Haydn [*Symphony No. 88*], ...

Palmer brought to the Hindemith [*Mathis der Maler*] the passion most conductors bring to Rachmaninoff, ... Palmer hears the music in dramatic terms, and there arose from the orchestra passages of hair-raising urgency and demonic drive...

—Charles Staff, *Indianapolis News*, 13 December 1980

Michael Palmer, the last of the Louisville Orchestra's guest conductors for the season, took over the podium at the Macauley Theatre last night for a demanding concert of music by Stravinsky,

Richard Strauss, and Brahms. He obviously knew the program well, and he conducted it with style and confidence. He is, by contemporary standards, a relatively modest and unfussy man of the baton. But he impresses as a forthright, honest musician and one who has learned his trade well. ...

Palmer conducted [Strauss' *Also Sprach Zarathustra*] with flair and understanding. Even in the most thickly scored passages, with everyone creating a tempest of sound, the performance was vital and clear-headed.

—William Mootz, *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 15 March 1980

Palmer invested the Stravinsky "*Dumbarton Oaks Concerto*" for 15 players with such jewel-like timing that every musical witticism beguiled the ear.

—F. W. Woolsey, *Louisville Times*, 15 March 1980

What [Palmer] did with the Oakland Symphony in a program of widely diverse styles was little short of miraculous. Completely responsive to his pliant but authoritative beat, the orchestra played with a devotion, excitement and musical finish that was stunning. Palmer is not a podium dancer, but he shaped each note, phrase, page and entire piece of music with picturesque zeal.

—Marilyn Tucker, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 10 May 1979

[The Tchaikovsky *Symphony No. 4*] was the highlight of the evening. The opening fanfares stirred the spirits and announced a no-frills approach by Palmer, characteristic of his conducting all evening. ...as the ending approached, Palmer and the [Houston Symphony] orchestra whipped a real sense of urgency into the music which roared to a thrilling ending.

—Charles Ward, *Houston Chronicle*, 9 November 1976

Antonin Dvorak's Seventh Symphony in D minor closed the concert. Palmer and the orchestra gave the effably beautiful score (especially the slow movement) what seemed to me to be a truly great performance. The lushness of tone, the dynamic shadings, the rhythmic verve — all came together to bring catches in the throat from sheer beauty.

—John Schneider, *Atlanta Journal*, 29 October 1976

Under the dynamic direction of Michael Palmer, the [Portland Symphony] orchestra performed with a new sound and a brighter tone, ...

At the outset, the crisp, short bars that begin [Beethoven's] "*Fidelio*" Overture served notice of what was to come. ... alive and moving all the way, and played with bright efficiency and cool dispatch.

...but it was really the Saint-Saens *Piano Concerto No. 5, Opus 103*, that stunned the audience ... pianist Lorin Hollander and Palmer joined in a reading of breadth and finish, to produce together an excitement and energy difficult to describe without shouting.

—John Thornton, *Portland Press Herald*, 22 October 1975