

# Symphonia Season Opener Brings Audience To Its Feet

By Marci Shatzman

The Symphonia chamber orchestra opened its 2023-2024 concert season with familiar works by Handel, Tchaikovsky and Copland's "Appalachian Spring," and an astonishing performance by an international violin virtuoso who's only 19.

Even Symphonia maestro Alastair Willis was impressed with Hina Khuong-Huu's direct connection to violin superstar Itzhak Perlman through The Julliard School and Columbia University. And local culture aficionados knew she had just won the 2023 triennial Elmar Oliveira International Violin Competition held at Lynn University in Boca Raton. "The youngest of four finalists scooped the first prize in the concerto final with her performance of Sibelius's Violin Concerto in D minor on Jan. 29," according to the Boca Raton Tribune.

It was nearly a full house for the recent 3 p.m. Symphonia performance in the Roberts Theater on the campus of the St. Andrew's School on Jog Road, where all the Symphonia concerts are held. Standing ovations for the other works and this wunderkind, who has already appeared on international stages and will perform Dec. 1 at the Kennedy Center in D.C. For newer residents or others wrongly lamenting Boca's cultural lapse, here's the link to the Symphonia's concerts on Dec. 3, Jan. 21, March 17 and the finale "Seeking Hayden" and the only evening con-

cert at 7 p.m. April 13. Each is preceded by an informal 2 p.m. intro by maestro Willis and an audience Q&A. <https://thesymphonia.org/attend/events/>

Willis dedicated the opening concert to the late Marshall Turkin, who directed major orchestras, composed and continued to perform in Boca with his jazz group well into his later years. His sons just donated his famous Steinway to the Conservatory of Music at Lynn University in Boca.

Since its inception in 2004 and first concert season in 2005-2006, the Symphonia has become the official orchestra of Festival of the Arts BOCA. So it wasn't surprising to see Festival executive director Joanna Marie Kaye. Her husband Jeffrey Kaye is the Symphonia's principal trumpeter and on the artistic advisory committee. The Festival just announced its lineup for March under the seated tent in Mizner Park Amphitheater. The headliner is none other than soprano extraordinaire Renée Fleming. Early bird tickets on sale at <https://festivalboca.org/> Also in the house was Florida Intergenerational Orchestra maestro Lorraine Marks-Field with her husband and orchestra manager Robert Field. Their annual holiday concert is coming up soon. <https://festivalboca.org/>

"There's nothing like hearing live music," Symphonia board secretary Sung Knowles said after the opening concert. Amen.



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