

## Symphonia Boca Raton & David Kim at Roberts Theatre – Grieg, Mendelssohn, Barber, Piazzolla, Dvořák

Sunday, January 07, 2018 Roberts Theatre, Saint Andrews School, Boca Raton, Florida

*Reviewed by David M. Rice*

Symphonia Boca Raton performed superbly with David Kim, concertmaster of the Philadelphia Orchestra, either leading or taking the soloist's position for Mendelssohn and Piazzolla. They opened with a delightful account of Grieg's Holberg Suite, originally written for piano to commemorate the bicentennial of fellow-Norwegian poet-dramatist Ludvig Baron Holberg, composed in the form of Baroque dances with melodies and harmonies typical of Grieg's late-nineteenth-century style rather than Holberg's earlier time. Kim, giving subtle direction as he played, opted for lively tempos so that neither the 'Sarabande' nor the 'Air' dragged. In the concluding 'Rigaudon' he and viola-player Scott O'Donnell tore through their parts as if they were *Hardanger* fiddlers.

Kim then gave a brilliant performance of the Mendelssohn. He again favored brisk tempos but the central Andante sang out unhurriedly and with beauty. His technique was dazzling and his phrasing consistently elegant. Kim's direction was aided by Mei Mei Luo, the Symphonia's regular concertmaster, returned to her accustomed seat, in keeping the musicians – woodwinds, brass and timpani now added to the strings – in sync.

The second half began with a gripping account of Samuel Barber's Adagio for Strings in which the coherence of the ensemble was particularly noteworthy, followed by Kim giving a moving reading of Astor Piazzolla's Oblivion in an arrangement that keeps the underlying tango pulse understated. Finally Dvořák's Serenade for Strings, its charming Bohemian folk influences brought out. Kim's lively tempos worked well, yet he also skillfully managed transitions to slower tempos and gave the Larghetto plenty of breathing room. The return of the genial opening melody came as a welcome contrast to the galloping Finale, until the coda brought the concert to a stirring close.

### **Grieg**

Holberg Suite, Op.40

### **Mendelssohn**

Violin Concerto in E-minor, Op.64

### **Barber**

Adagio for Strings, Op.11a

### **Piazzolla**

Oblivion [arr. Robert Longfield]

### **Dvořák**

Serenade for Strings in E, Op.22

Symphonia Boca Raton

David Kim (violin)

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