



“Stephen Waarts gave an outstanding debut at the Kennedy Center’s Terrace Theater. In a fine program of Beethoven, Bartok, Ravel and Waxman – difficult music, in a range of styles and impeccably rendered – Waarts showed an uncommon, preternatural sense of tonal color and lyrical beauty on the instrument.”

– **THE WASHINGTON POST**

“Still in his teens, Stephen Waarts, as tall and thin as Ichabod Crane but with an angelic countenance that mirrored his fiddling, played the Brahms Concerto with unreal poise, technical command, and a totally natural sense of musical drama, complementing conductor Maxim Vengerov’s visionary approach and the Montreal Symphony’s inspired playing.”



STEPHEN WAARTS, violinist – STRINGS MAGAZINE

“Mr. Waarts showed himself a technically accomplished and musically insightful artist, though he was most impressive in Bartok’s extraordinary Sonata for Solo Violin. Mr. Waarts, playing commandingly from memory, balanced passages that evolve in the halting dance idiom of the chaconne with rhapsodic stretches that in this gripping account seemed somberly ruminative. He was comparably inspired in the resolute intricate fugue, the searching slow movement marked Melodia, and the frenetic finale.”

– **THE NEW YORK TIMES**

“Waarts displayed well-polished sonorities that were consistently executed with cleanliness and clarity. He played through his part as if nothing Mendelssohn had written posed any unmanageable challenge. This was familiar music; but the execution had a freshness to it. This was a reading that seized attention from the opening notes and held it to the final cadence.”

– **EXAMINER.COM** (Mendelssohn Concerto)

“From the first note ... I was hooked, and within a few bars, I was moved to tears”

– **THE STRAD** (2010 Menuhin Competition in Oslo, Norway)

“In the finale, we saw a return of Waarts’ agility and speed as he and the orchestra flew to a rousing finale. The audience leapt to their feet to give him what is sure to be one of many standing ovations in what is sure to be a stellar career.”

– **DAILY REPUBLIC**

Fifth Prize and the Audience Prize, 2015 Queen Elisabeth Competition
First Prize, 2014 Menuhin Competition



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STEPHEN WAARTS, violinist

Violinist **Stephen Waarts** has been praised for playing “with technical command and a totally natural sense of musical drama” (*Strings Magazine*). He has already garnered worldwide recognition, having captured the Audience Prize at the 2015 Queen Elisabeth Competition; First Prize at the 2014 Menuhin Competition; and Second Prize and the Audience Prize in the 2013 Montreal International Competition.

This season, Mr. Waarts showcases his wide-ranging concerto repertoire, performing Lalo with the Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra, Tchaikovsky with the Auburn Symphony Orchestra, Mendelssohn with the Aiken Symphony Orchestra and the Brevard Philharmonic, and Prokofiev with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s at Alice Tully Hall. Abroad, he plays Brahms with Orquesta Filarmónica de Medellín in Colombia, Paganini with the South Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, and Mozart with the Bremer Philharmoniker in Germany. Mr. Waarts appears in recitals in the U.S. at Del Valle Fine Arts, the Cosmos Club, the Chamber Music Society of Palm Beach; in Poland at Salon Christophori and the Krzyzowa Music Festival; and in Switzerland at Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich.

Acclaimed from a young age, he has already performed over thirty standard, as well as rarely performed, violin concertos, appearing as soloist with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Navarra and the Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal, as well as with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of the Triangle, the Brevard Sinfonia, the Bucks County Symphony, and with numerous orchestras throughout California. As a Laureate of the Queen Elisabeth Competition, he performed the Glazunov Concerto with the Brussels Philharmonic in Liège, Brussels, and Bruges, and recitals at Festival Musiq’3 and Juillet Musical d’Aulne. Mr. Waarts has appeared in recital at the Louvre in Paris and is a frequent participant at Music@Menlo, the French Classical Music Festival of Silicon Valley, the Summit Music Festival, and the Orford and Lake George Music Festivals. He has also performed recitals at Arts at Abingdon in Virginia, Morning Musicales in Philadelphia, the Jewish Community Alliance in Florida, the Rodef Shalom Congregation in Pittsburgh, FPC Concerts, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, the Morgan Library and Museum, and the Brownville Concert Series.

As Winner of the 2013 Young Concert Artists International Auditions, he made recital debuts last season at the Kennedy Center and Merkin Concert Hall, to rave reviews. Mr. Waarts was also honored with five other special awards, including the Rhoda Walker Teagle Prize, the Sander Buchman Prize, the Paul A. Fish Prize, and the Ronald A. Asherson Prize.

A native of the San Francisco Bay Area, Stephen Waarts started his music education with Suzuki violin lessons and piano studies, and studied with Li Lin at the San Francisco Conservatory. He studied with Itzhak Perlman at the Perlman Music Program, and with Aaron Rosand at the Curtis Institute, where he held the Frank S. Bayley Annual Fellowship. He is currently a Master’s student at the Kronberg Academy in Germany, working with Mihaela Martin.

[Pronunciation: Surname “Waarts” rhymes with “Hearts”]

NOTE: When editing, please do not delete references to Young Concert Artists, nor special prizes.
Please do not use previously dated biographies.

12/2016

STEPHEN WAARTS, *violin*

REPERTOIRE WITH ORCHESTRA

J. S. BACH	Violin Concerto No. 2 in E Major, BWV 1042 Double Violin Concerto in D minor, BWV 1043
BARBER	Violin Concerto, Op. 14
BARTÓK	Violin Concerto No. 1, Sz. 36 Violin Concerto No. 2, Sz. 112
BEETHOVEN	Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 61 Romance No. 1 in G Major, Op. 40
BERG	Violin Concerto, "To the Memory of an Angel"
BERNSTEIN	<i>Serenade after Plato's "Symposium"</i>
BRAHMS	Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 77 Double Concerto in A minor, Op. 102
BRITTEN	Violin Concerto, Op. 15
BRUCH	Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26 Scottish Fantasy, Op. 46
BULL	Cantabile doloroso e Rondo Giocoso (cadenza by Stephen Waarts)
CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO	Violin Concerto No. 2, Op. 66, "The Prophets"
CHAUSSON	<i>Poème</i> , Op. 25
DVOŘÁK	Violin Concerto in A minor, Op. 53
ELGAR	Violin Concerto in B minor, Op. 61 La Capricieuse, Op. 17
ERNST	Violin Concerto in F-sharp minor, Op. 23
GLAZUNOV	Violin Concerto in A minor, Op. 82
KABALEVSKY	Violin Concerto in C Major, Op. 48
KORNGOLD	Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35
LALO	<i>Symphonie espagnole</i> , Op. 21
MENDELSSOHN	Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64 Violin Concerto in D minor
MOZART	Violin Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Major, K.207

	Violin Concerto No. 2 in D Major, K. 211 Violin Concerto No. 3 in G Major, K. 216 Violin Concerto No. 4 in D Major, K. 218 (cadenza by Stephen Waarts) Violin Concerto No. 5 in A Major, K. 219, "Turkish" (cadenza by Stephen Waarts) Sinfonia Concertante for Violin and Viola in E-flat Major, K. 364 Adagio in E Major, K. 261 (cadenza by Stephen Waarts)
PAGANINI	Violin Concerto No. 1 in D Major, Op. 6 Violin Concerto No. 2 in B minor, Op. 7 (cadenza by Stephen Waarts)
PROKOFIEV	Violin Concerto No. 1 in D Major, Op. 19 Violin Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 63
RAVEL	<i>Tzigane</i>
SAINT-SAËNS	Violin Concerto No. 3 in B minor, Op. 61 Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso in A minor, Op. 28 Havanaise in E Major, Op. 83
SARASATE	<i>Carmen Fantasy</i> , Op. 25 Introduction and Tarantella, Op. 43 <i>Zigeunerweisen</i> , Op. 20 <i>Zapateado</i> , Op. 23, No. 2
SHOSTAKOVICH	Violin Concerto No. 1 in A minor, Op. 99 Violin Concerto No. 2 in C sharp minor, Op. 129 Violin Concerto No. 2, Op. 129
SCHUMANN	Violin Concerto in D minor
SIBELIUS	Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47
STRAVINSKY	Violin Concerto in D
SZYMANOWSKI	Violin Concerto No. 1, Op. 35
TARTINI	Violin Concerto in E minor, D. 56, "Bagna le piume in Lete..."
TCHAIKOVSKY	Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35 Valse-Scherzo in C Major, Op. 34
VIEUXTEMPS	Violin Concerto No. 5 in A minor, Op. 37
VIVALDI	<i>The Four Seasons</i> , Op. 8 Concerto for Four Violins in B minor, RV 580, Op. 3 No. 10
WALTON	Violin Concerto in B minor
WAXMAN	<i>Carmen Fantasie</i>
WIENIAWSKI	Violin Concerto No. 1 in F-sharp minor, Op. 14 Violin Concerto No. 2 in D minor, Op. 22

Polonaise de Concert in D Major, Op. 4, No. 1
Polonaise Brillante, Op. 21
Fantaisie Brillante sur Faust de Gounod, Op. 20

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Stephen Waarts, *violinist*



Young Festival del Sole violinist on the brink of stardom

L. Pierce Carson | Napa Valley Register | July 29, 2015

For one of the early performances in the now popular Bouchaine Young Artist Series, Festival del Sole producers invited a young Bay Area violinist to perform. The 12-year-old student not only impressed the festival audience, he made series sponsors Gerret and Tatiana Copeland, owners of Bouchaine Vineyards, sit up and take notice.

Last week, the festival invited him to return — now 2 meters tall, a student at the renowned Curtis Institute in Philadelphia and winner of two of the most prestigious competitions in the world, taking the coveted first prizes at the 2013 Young Concert Artists International Auditions and 2014 Yehudi Menuhin International Violin Competition.

The lanky Dutch-American is quickly earning an international reputation as one of the most prodigiously gifted young concert artists to emerge in recent years.

After listening to a program that included Schubert, Prokofiev and Ravel, the full house at Jarvis Conservatory recognized this performance was one to cherish. Not only because it was offered free of charge but because each and every one in the venue knew they'd seen a young man on the brink of stardom. "The next Joshua Bell," someone called out departing the intimate concert hall.

Prokofiev's "Violin Sonata No. 2 in D Major, Op. 94a," was based on the composer's own "Flute Sonata in D, Op. 94," written in 1942 but arranged for violin in 1943 when Prokofiev was living in the Ural Mountains, a remote shelter for Soviet artists during World War II. Among those present at the world premiere of the sonata in 1943 was friend and violinist David Oistrakh who later persuaded Prokofiev to arrange the work for violin and piano. Prokofiev's original intentions notwithstanding, Oistrakh's suggestion of a violin arrangement was most propitious and this sonata remains a mainstay of both the violin and flute repertoires. The sonata in its violin rendition was premiered by Oistrakh in Moscow the following year. The transcription betrays little of its grim wartime origins, mixing Prokofiev's lyrical warmth with his playful mischief.

Waarts accented the French lyricism of the opening movement and the playful Scherzo showed off its gypsy colors. The young violinist captured beautifully the serenity of the Andante and underscored the composer's dancelike flights of fancy in the Finale. We loved Waart's tonal purity, along with his remarkable range of expressive colors.

The opening work, Franz Schubert's "Sonata in D Major, D. 574," couldn't have contrasted more. Offering evidence of maturing lyricism, the piece displayed Beethoven's influence but also the composer's endearing tunefulness.

Waarts caught the dreamy, other-worldly quality of even the simplest phrases, and pianist Miles Graber — who proved a worthy partner throughout the performance — was equally adept at the mood changes and harmonic

surprises one expects in Schubert.
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Their rapport was evident as well for Maurice Ravel's "Tzigane," the composer's idea of what romantic violin showmanship should sound like. While not incorporating actual gypsy melodies, the work does sound quite exotic. The very talented young violinist offered a jaw-droppingly virtuosic performance of intensity, exoticism and vibrant melody.

In addition to a lovely gypsy-styled piece from violinist Fritz Kreisler, "La Gitana," Waarts also charmed his new Napa fan club with a spellbinding performance of "Meditation," from Massenet's "Thais," one of the loveliest encore pieces ever. By this time, Stephen Waarts could do no wrong.

I have a feeling the next time locals see and hear young Stephen Waarts, we'll be buying a ticket to a performance in a much larger concert hall.



Stephen Waarts, *violinist*

The New York Times

Never Too Young to Take On Beethoven and Bartok Stephen Waarts Debuts at Merkin Concert Hall

- Anthony Tommasini | *The New York Times* | December 16, 2014

At just 18, the violinist Stephen Waarts has already taken top prizes in competitions and played more than 30 concertos with various orchestras. It's a wonder he has time for his studies at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia.

On Monday night at Merkin Concert Hall, Mr. Waarts, who comes from the San Francisco Bay Area, added another achievement to his résumé by making his recital debut in New

York as a winner of the 2013 Young Concert Artists International Auditions. With the excellent young pianist Chelsea Wang, a colleague from Curtis, Mr. Waarts showed himself a technically accomplished and musically insightful artist, though he was most impressive in Bartok's extraordinary Sonata for Solo Violin, completed in 1944, when the composer was fatally ill with leukemia.

When he first appeared onstage, the lanky Mr. Waarts looked typically awkward teenager. He became all grace and assurance, though, once he started playing Beethoven's Sonata
Hall.



Young Concert Artists: Stephen Waarts, a like a student at the Curtis Institute of Music, making his debut in New York at Merkin Concert

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for Violin and Piano No. 8 in G (Op. 30, No. 3) with Ms. Wang, a lithe, spirited account of an inventive early piece.

Bartok wrote his solo violin sonata on commission from Yehudi Menuhin, who gave the premiere at Carnegie Hall in 1944. This formidable 25-minute work opens with an elaborate movement marked Tempo di Ciaccona, clearly inspired by the awesome Chaconne that concludes Bach's Partita No. 2 for Solo Violin. Mr. Waarts, playing commandingly from memory, balanced passages that evolve in the halting dance idiom of the chaconne with rhapsodic stretches that in this gripping account seemed somberly ruminative. He was comparably inspired in the resolute, intricate fugue, the searching slow movement marked Melodia, and the frenetic finale.

After intermission, Mr. Waarts and Ms. Wang gave a colorful, vibrant performance of Ravel's Sonata in G. The first movement was aptly fluid and dreamy; the jazzy second movement, impish and sly. The breathless perpetual motion finale had both sparkle and intensity. Still, the overall effect was marred by the decision not to open the lid on the piano fully: it was just propped open a few inches. Violinists always worry that their sound will be covered by a piano's during duos. But Ms. Wang showed fine control for dynamics. The piano part in this piece is rich and nuanced. Much detail was lost.

To end, Mr. Waarts played two works that were like programmed encores: a short, sultry one, Ravel's "Pièce en Forme de Habanera," followed by a long, showy one, "Carmen" Fantasy. Franz Waxman's paraphrase of hit tunes from the Bizet opera, originally for violin and orchestra, an unabashed piece of virtuosic display. Mr. Waarts certainly dispatched it brilliantly. But this seemed a lost opportunity to play something more substantial. How about a piece by a living composer?



Stephen Waarts, violinist

THE BUFFALO NEWS

Violinist Stephen Waarts displays his phenomenal technique in 'Gift to the Community' Concert

-Garaud MacTaggart | The Buffalo News | November 10, 2014

Once again the Buffalo Chamber Music Society's Sunday afternoon "Gift to the Community" concerts in Kleinhans Music Hall have proven to be an invaluable way of showcasing new, young talent before an audience that might never have heard of them before.

The program this time featured violinist Stephen Waarts who has studied with two titans of the instrument, Itzhak Perlman and Aaron Rosand. One has to assume that those guys saw potential and, based on Sunday's performance, they would have been right. Waarts is phenomenal from a technical standpoint and his interpretive skills are already at a high level.

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Word must have gotten out into the community about Waarts' abilities because the room was packed, something that doesn't necessarily happen when the Bills' games are televised or played out at The Ralph.

It should be noted that the violinist was not the only performer on the docket. Pianist Chelsea Wang was wonderful in support but saying that shouldn't imply that she was anything other than superb in her role, so much so that a solo recital featuring her talents would probably be rewarding, too.

The program opened with Ludwig van Beethoven's Violin Sonata in G major (op. 30, no. 3), the performance of which augured well for the rest of the concert. It featured an allegro with sharply detailed playing from both musicians which led into the formal beauty of the minuet and finished off with another allegro that raced to a more than satisfactory ending.

Waarts then opted for one of the more challenging scores from the last century, Bela Bartok's Sonata for Solo Violin. It's an important work from the back end of the composer's life and also the last chamber music piece he wrote. Technical challenges abound and the sonata doesn't bloom without a talent that can turn those challenges into art. Luckily, this at-times thorny score was in good hands this time.

After the intermission, Waarts and Wang reveled in a couple of pieces by Maurice Ravel – the Violin Sonata No. 2 in G major and the "Piece en forme de Habanera."

In the sonata, the violinist found a way to make the opening notes rise from a barely perceptible place and float over the piano's piquant sonic underpinning. The second movement – titled "Blues" – was not the sort of thing that blues/jazz violinists like Butch Cage or Stuff Smith would have played, but Ravel's writing for the piano had elements of the genre hovering in the background while the concluding movement was played as if a nest of bees had been stirred up, driving the piece to an energetic conclusion.

The short "Habanera" wore its Hispanic influences well and with Franz Waxman's "Fantasy on Themes from 'Carmen,' " provided some agreeable fireworks to close the set. The audience left the hall, after a brief encore, fully sated. It was probably better than watching the Bills game.

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Stephen Waarts, *violinist*

LaScena
Musicale

Rising Stars: Stephen Waarts

Paul E. Robinson | La Scena Musicale | October 2014

It was a cool and rainy August evening when Stephen Waarts dazzled a near-capacity audience at the 2014 Orford Festival with music by Mozart, Bartók, Beethoven and Ravel. This tall, skinny 18-year-old from the Bay Area demonstrated maturity far beyond his years and a virtuosity that would be the envy of violinists of any age. This young man has been steadily winning international competitions and stands on the verge of a major career.

The Waarts story begins in California. His father is an optical engineer and his mother a computer scientist. There was no music in the family, but it appears that Stephen inherited exceptional skills in mathematics, winning several national prizes. After some years of Suzuki training, he studied with Li Lin at the San Francisco Conservatory and then with Itzhak Perlman. He is currently working with Aaron Rosand at the Curtis Institute.

At the Menuhin International Festival in Austin last March, Waarts sailed through every round and emerged with the top prize. At the winner's concert he played Prokofiev with the Cleveland Orchestra conducted by Giancarlo Guerrero.

In 2010 he won second prize in the junior division of the Menuhin Competition, held that year in Norway, and in 2011 he won first prize at the International Louis Spohr Competition. Last year he finished second at the Montreal International Music Competition.

When I met Waarts, I was struck by his quiet and gentle demeanour. Is there a seething competitive spirit that lurks beneath that shy exterior? "I enter competitions to learn the repertoire, to meet the great musicians on the jury and my fellow competitors," he said. "And I get good feedback. Competitions help me to stay focused and have goals. I try not to think of it as playing against other people. I first think of it as playing a concert and see how it goes from there."

Winning competitions has been good for his career but even more helpful was his success at the Young Concert Artists International Auditions: "I get help with management for the next two years and some performances."

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Waarts has an insatiable curiosity about music, already mastering a huge repertoire including 35 concertos. Among them are all the warhorses but also rarities like the *Castelnuovo-Tedesco Violin Concerto "Prophets."*

At his Orford recital Stephen made a strong impression with his performance of Bartók's *Sonata for Violin Solo*. His intonation was impeccable and he effortlessly captured the work's many moods and colours. With Curtis colleague Chelsea Wang, an equally impressive partner at the piano, Waarts gave an amazing interpretation of Ravel's *Sonate*. Again, every note was in tune, the phrasing was idiomatic and the tone quality rich and full. The jazz elements in the slow movement were perfectly realized with just the right touch of humour and melancholy, and the finale was brilliant and exciting.

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Stephen Waarts, violinist

DAILY REPUBLIC

Symphony's 'Great Composers' concert another excellent performance *Kathleen Whalen* | *Daily Republic (Fairfield-Suisun, CA)* | *March 30, 2012*

There was at least one bright spot in last week's rainy and dreary weekend – the Solano Community Symphony Orchestra "'Great Composers of the World"' concerts in Fairfield and Vacaville. The first half featured the "'Symphony No. 6 in K major, Op. 60"' of Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904). His first symphony (but the sixth presented to the public) and less familiar to most than Dvorak's "'New World"' symphony, "'Symphony No. 6"' is typically Dvorak; colorful orchestration, seamless transitions between major and minor keys and with memorable melodies.

Music director and conductor Semyon Lohss and the Solano Community Symphony excel at this type of music and seem to enjoy the opportunity to elaborate and then pass phrases and melodic lines between sections. The Allegro ma non tanto drew us in immediately, as French horns and lower strings worked together in an inexorable increase in tension that was not released until, with a flourish, trumpets and trombones recapitulated the opening theme.

French horn principal Angelina Contreras was powerful yet restrained in several solo passages in the second movement, while Dan Scharlin's flute was alternately passionate and quietly mournful. In the third movement, Lohss' string section played with lively good humor until, with the triumphant return of the trombones and trumpets, the final movement ended with selfpossessed resolution.

The second half of the program featured guest artist Stephen Waarts in the familiar "Violin Concerto in

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D major, Op. 35," by Piotr Tchaikovsky (1840-1893). Even in a region rich in musical talent, young Waarts is an exceptional talent. Only 16, he has been studying in the Bachelor of music program at the famed Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia and has appeared with orchestras all over the world.

Though, surprisingly, it was not immediately successful with either performers or audiences, the Tchaikovsky violin concerto is now one of the best-loved and most-performed pieces in the violin repertoire. A virtuoso show-piece, the concerto requires confidence and expertise; Waarts displayed ample amounts of both. In the first movement, Waarts presented the main theme with lyrical simplicity, but very soon was engaged in pyrotechnical display. He played rapidly and with remarkably clean articulation, but with such consummate musicianship that he, and so we, never lost track of the thematic development in the movement.

Wendy Seres on clarinet and Linda Soares on bassoon and the rest of the very fine Solano Symphony woodwind section opened and closed the second movement, while Waarts soulful violin wove plaintively throughout.

In the finale, we saw a return of Waarts' agility and speed as he and the orchestra flew to a rousing finale. The audience leapt to their feet to give Waarts what is sure to be one of many standing ovations in what is sure to be a stellar career.

Lohss and the Solano Community Symphony Orchestra continues to offer audiences the chance to hear their friends and neighbors play the best of the classical music repertoire with skill and passion. We are indeed fortunate!

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Stephen Waarts, violinist

THE DAILY JOURNAL
The Peninsula's homepage

A chance to see a true musical prodigy

Keith Kreitman | *Daily Journal* (San Mateo, CA) | May 31, 2011

Well, the opportunity is now to experience another upcoming world-class violinist, one of Silicon Valley and South Bay's own, the 14-year-old Stephen Waarts of Los Altos. It's an understatement to label him as only a prodigy because he has already performed some of the most difficult and famous of the adult concerti with a number of Bay Area symphony orchestras and is preparing to perform what may be the most difficult of all, the "Mario Castelnuovo Tedesco Concerto," in Los Angeles in August. Also, he has won numerous first places in competitions, nationally and internationally and performed abroad in Norway, Moscow and Weimar, Germany.

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I first heard Stephen, when he was only 8 and playing a three-quarter size instrument, at the request of his, then, teacher Jenny Rudin. He simply knocked me off of the stool, not just by his advanced technique, which I had experienced a number of times in my reviewing of the wonderful youth orchestras and soloists in this area, but by his unexpectedly advanced and mature interpretations for an 8-year-old and the emotion-evoking quality of his sound. He is one of only a few world-class violinists who can bring me to tears with that rare beauty.

He has been developing outside of the parameters of the other young symphony soloists in the Bay Area, who conventionally compete for solo spots with their own orchestras, but has won first place honors in every other local competition he entered. But, it wasn't until — at age 11 — when he won a competition for string players up to the age of 24 sponsored by the Diablo Symphony and then knocked the socks of that audience with a Wieniawski concerto, I became convinced this one was destined to become one of the world's greatest.

And, he hasn't caused me to doubt that prediction, ever. All of his accomplishments are too extensive for me to list here but summarizing: Performances of 11 complete famous concerti by Beethoven, Brahms Elgar, Tchaikovsky, Wieniawski, Paganini, Mozart, Saint-Saens and Mendelssohn, with 17 different symphonic and string orchestras, some for multiple times.

Most memorable for me is when he performed at Carnegie Hall among 22 others youngsters who won first places in a number of different musical art forms and outclassed all of them, which led to an invitation to represent the United States at an international music festival for young musicians in Moscow. From among over a thousand young musicians from around the world, he was chosen to perform at the Grand Closing Concert at the Moscow University.

But, his crowning competitive achievements may have been, at age 13, a second place win at, perhaps, the most prestigious string competitions of all, the Yehudi Menuhin International Competition for Young Violinists in Oslo, Norway (where international music critics hinted he should have won first place), followed by a first place win at the Louis Spohr competition in Weimar, Germany where he was, also, given a special award for the best interpretation of a romantic concerto by all of the competitors.

Recently, he has come to the attention of, whom I consider the greatest of the world's violinists, Itzhak Perlman, and was invited for special private lessons. And in fall, he will enroll as a scholarship student at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, where his teacher will be the famed concert violinist Aaron Rosand.

The Silicon Valley Symphony is one of the best of the Bay Area's orchestral ensembles, directed by its founder, Michael Gibson. The rest of the program includes Rossini's "L'Italiana in Algeri Overture," Vaughan Williams' "Fantasy on a Theme by Thomas Tallis" and Prokofiev's "Classical Symphony."

Stephen will be performing, arguably, the most popular of the great concerti, the surpassingly beautiful "Mendelssohn Concerto," which will put little demand upon his extraordinary technique but will be a prime vehicle for your experiencing the maturity of his musical expression and the beauty of his sound.

I wonder how many, as I, wished they had been able to hear such as Yehudi Menuhin, Itzhak Perlman or Jascha Heifetz when they were young prodigies to be able to say, I heard "so and so way back when...?"

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Stephen Waarts, *violinist*

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SAN FRANCISCO
CLASSICAL VOICE

Storm and Sunshine in the Redwoods

David Bratman | San Francisco Classical Voice | September 25, 2010

The Redwood Symphony celebrated its 25th anniversary on Saturday, opening its season with a potpourri of pleasing music at Cañada College in Redwood City. Eric Kujawsky, who founded the orchestra and has been its music director for all 25 years, conducted the occasion. Sixteen members of the orchestra have been with it all that time, as well, and got to stand and take a round of applause.

Although it was not mentioned from the podium or in the program notes, Saturday was another anniversary, too: the 104th anniversary of Dmitri Shostakovich's birth. That's perhaps a minor number in the grand scheme of anniversaries, so it was marked with a minor work, his Festive Overture. And altogether festive it was in Redwood Symphony's rough yet cheerful handling, entirely lacking in the grimly overblown "forced rejoicing" that Solomon Volkov's book *Testimony* has taught us to hear in much of Shostakovich's "public" music. There was crisp playing here, especially in the brass — something we'd hear a lot of in this concert.

After that came something completely different. Niccolò Paganini's Violin Concerto No. 2 in B Minor, Op. 7, is a rather dull little work, actually, though it's redeemed by a couple of good melodies, including a duet for the soloist and glockenspiel (thus the work's nickname, "La Campanella"), and the opportunity for the violinist — originally the composer himself, of course — to show off. On this occasion, that fortune fell on a local boy, Stephen Waarts. Just turned 14 two months ago, and looking not a day older, Waarts stunned the audience with his dark, mature tone and his assured and confident approach to the music. He has an artful sense of pitch, which came out particularly gracefully in the glissandos. He wrote his own first-movement cadenza, a good pastiche of the Paganini style. No mindless trick performer, he brought out such beauty in the melodic line as could be found, with a rich sound especially in the double-stops. He wisely played to his strength by choosing another virtuoso piece thick in double-stops for his encore, one of Henryk Wieniawski's Op. 18 caprices.

Considering everything else it had to do in this concert, the orchestra apparently did not concern itself much with rehearsing its backup role in the Paganini. And that was an appropriate allocation of resources, as the spotlight in a virtuoso concerto like this one belongs to the soloist. Youthful though he is, Stephen Waarts fully occupied it.

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