



## Zlatomir Fung, *cellist*

### BENICIA HERALD

#### Review: Vallejo Symphony

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Soloist Zlatomir Fung, left, and VSO Director Marc Taddei attended a post-concert reception at Avery-Green Honda in Vallejo Sunday evening. (Photo by Susie Peterson)

The Vallejo Symphony Orchestra (VSO) played the second concert of its 2016-17 season to an impressive crowd at the Hogan Auditorium in Vallejo Sunday. Marc Taddei seemed excited to be presenting not only “the greatest symphony ever written,” as he describes Beethoven’s Eroica, but also a fresh, early work by Haydn and a special performance by a bright young talent in Shostakovich’s Cello Concerto No. 1, featuring prodigy cellist Zlatomir Fung of Massachusetts.

Shostakovich’s Cello Concerto No. 1 begins simply, with a four-note theme presented by the solo cello. The theme is quickly elaborated upon by string sections and builds to pulsating, percussive waves, beating solidly and steadily like a gently rolling sea against the prow of a ship. Listeners are drawn slyly and smoothly into the more frenetic pace and tone of the second, moderato movement. The even rhythm of the preceding allegretto falls away to a more restless tone, creating a picture of an escapee frantically navigating unknown avenues, some ominous force pressing him urgently forward. In turn, the frenzy of the movement is somewhat calmed by soothing tones from the bassoon, as if a great bird were soaring above the fray, alerting the subject to a route to safety. Horns and clarinets also contribute contrasting sounds of soothing amid the urgency of the solo cello and its accompanying larger strings. As if in response to the encouraging winds, the solo cello takes on an assertive thread leading into the subsequent *cadenza* movement.

This is where Fung had the greatest opportunity Sunday to demonstrate to listeners how he has come to win so many impressive awards at his young age. The 17-year-old cellist showed a mastery of his instrument that was truly a thing to behold. He was lost in the magic of the music, maneuvering the strings with exquisite control as he created his own musical mosaic