

Barrie Concert Review – Saturday May 5th, 2018 at 7:30 p.m. - “Stage and Screen” - Kerry Stratton conducts the Toronto Concert Orchestra and Pianist Younggun Kim



Toronto Concert Orchestra “Stage & Screen” with pianist Younggun Kim, May 5

submitted by Alyssa Wright

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It was a full house for the Barrie Concerts’ “season finale”. The Toronto Concert Orchestra conducted by Kerry Stratton, presented “Stage & Screen”, a collection of music from popular Broadway musicals (such as “*Phantom of the Opera*” and “*Sound of Music*”), films (“*Raiders of the Lost Ark*”, “*Star Wars*”), and even a popular television series (“*Game of Thrones*”).

The programming reminded me of summertime open-air concerts, where passers-by would be drawn in by familiar melodies — I was surprised (and perhaps a little disappointed) to not see more youthful faces in the audience, as the music presented would have been a nice bridge from the more popular genres into classical music. The younger folks I did see seemed to enjoy the evening quite a bit, though, so hopefully they will return next season!

The concert was an obvious “hit” with the audience, with heads bobbing and a number of “Bravo!”-s being shouted. They even got to sing along with some of the numbers, including when Stratton turned and led them through “*Edelweiss*”.

I was particularly impressed with the orchestra’s “rhythm section” — always busy in pops programs — especially the percussionist Dan Morphy, whose skills and musicality were demonstrated throughout the evening, including a beautiful solo in the “*Porgy and Bess*” medley. In some of the more rhythmic numbers, Stratton even let the rhythm section’s “groove” take over the lead, occasionally dropping his baton and dancing along instead.

Other special mentions must include the concertmaster, Marcus Scholtes, whose violin solo in the music from “*Schindler’s List*” was breathtaking, as well as the smooth trumpet solo by Bob Venables in “*As Time Goes By*”.

It was a curious decision to wait until after the music from “*West Side Story*” (easily sounding like a finale, and garnering a standing ovation) to move the Shigeru grand piano in for the featured soloist. Despite Stratton’s “we’re not done, don’t leave!” plea, there were a few who did, and missed the incredible pianist Younggun Kim and his rendition of a beautiful piano concerto (a work that took less time than the interruption of the show’s momentum). Kim’s performance was brilliant and enchanting, as he danced over the rhapsodic passages of this gorgeous work, accompanied by the rich lines of the orchestra.

After a well-deserved standing ovation, Kim’s encore was Chopin’s “*Revolutionary Etude*”, arranged for left-hand only (“because I’m crazy”, he said with a laugh). You had to watch his right hand to make sure he wasn’t “cheating”, such was the masterful balance between the strong melodic line and the lightly burbling arpeggiated accompaniment — a magnificent performance!