

Evening Express, Aberdeen  
Saturday, 23 May 2009  
Jim Strachan

## Spellbinding special guest's Music Hall debut

THE SSO brought their excellent season to a close with another fine performance, aided by a special guest in the shape of Anne Akiko Meyers. The acclaimed Californian made a triumphant debut in Aberdeen with a spellbinding performance of Samuel Barber's Violin Concerto.

Jim Strachan *EE 23-5-09*  
Saw The BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra at the Music Hall, Aberdeen

Her solo performance of Over The Rainbow from The Wizard Of Oz was a charming encore. The orchestra began the evening in

fine fettle with Maurice Ravel's lightweight but pleasant Mother Goose Suite, and followed Meyer's appearance with Belgian composer Cesar Franck's Symphony In D Minor – a somewhat heavier course, the highlight of which was the clever second movement.

## The Scotsman, Edinburgh

Saturday, 23 May 2009

Kenneth Walton

### BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra

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#### CITY HALLS, GLASGOW (Thursday, 21 May)

The BBC SSO ended its Glasgow season with a programme that superseded its modest expectations. Franck's D Minor Symphony I can take or leave; Ravel's *Mother Goose Suite* is a gem, but we do hear it rather a lot. This left Barber's brilliantly inspired *Violin Concerto* as the main attraction. It didn't disappoint. But neither did the other two works, which conductor Carlo Rizzi showed at their best. The delicacies of the Ravel were dreamlike, a veritable bedtime story unfolding in whispered tones, with magical moments of scintillating colour and an overriding poetic balance.

Contrast that with the industrial architecture of Franck's Symphony, whose elemental themes, together with their obsessive presence, can so easily turn into a musical equivalent of Chinese water torture. But in careful hands – such as Rizzi's – this nuts-and-bolts construction can be impressive. In this instance, the conductor engineered Franck's organ-like sonorities with utter belief in their explosive, emotive power.

The Barber concerto is a work that combines fresh thought with an underlying late-Romantic spirit. But the big surprise on Thursday was American violinist Anne Akiko Meyers, whose solo performance marked her out as a foremost interpreter of its inordinate energy and beauty.

The finale exploded into a foot-stamping send-off, such was her physical exuberance in the dazzling *moto perpetuo*. Rizzi and the SSO played their part with equal flair, but why *Somewhere over the Rainbow* as an unaccompanied, unadorned encore? A strange choice, although a lovely moment nonetheless.

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Johnston Press Digital Publishing

The Press & Journal, Aberdeen  
Saturday, 23 May 2009  
Roddy Phillips

BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra at The Music Hall, Aberdeen (Friday, 22 May)

## Virtuoso violinist captivates Music Hall audience

### ARTS REVIEW

BY RODDY PHILLIPS

IF YOU were looking for the epitome of a romantic virtuoso violinist it would have to be the American soloist Anne Akiko Meyers. Last night she appeared at the Music Hall in Aberdeen with the BBC SSO in a sil-

very Grecian gown looking like Pygmalion's lovely statue come to life.

Her visual presence aside a more consummately serious musician would be hard to find. Performing Barber's heady Violin Concerto she made her fellow string players smile with delight, to say nothing of spellbinding the audience.

Ms Meyers was a child prodigy, now she is an adult classical star. Many well known composers have written celebrated works specially for her and last night as she played the "Royal Spanish" Antonius Stradivarius violin you would have thought the Barber Violin Concerto was one of those works.

Conductor Carlo Rizzi made an excellent job creating a finely balanced sound from the orchestra as he did throughout the rest of the programme of sunny, warm music by Ravel and Franck.

However, I imagine it was Anne Akiko Meyers who stood out in most people's minds.

Press + Journal, Aberdeen 23 May 2009