

Timeout Hong Kong: Kevin Ng

David Garrett & the Hong Kong Sinfonietta

City Hall April 18 &19, 2009

There was plenty of star quality on display last Saturday night when the crossover violinist star David Garrett returned to Hong Kong to perform again with the Hong Kong Sinfonietta under the baton of Yip Wing-sie. Garrett chose Bruch's *Violin Concerto No. 1*. The 'Beckham of the classical world' was attired in a black suit and black shirt, with his long blond hair bound in a ponytail.

In the first two movements (linked together), Garrett's playing was full of passion and emotional intensity. His facial expressions were interesting to behold; at times it was as if he was dreaming. He also seemed to have a repertory of casual bodily movements, frequently looking round to the conductor and the orchestra players, or touching his hair. He really seemed to be enjoying every minute on stage.

Garrett was at his most playful in the final allegro movement. His technical virtuosity was so dazzling, and enhanced by his rotating upper body movements. What a brilliant and hot-blooded performance.

Garrett unexpectedly gave two encores after the thunderous applause. He first thanked the audience, and then joked that it's 9am in New York right now and that he was adjusting to his jet lag. The first encore was Paganini's *Carnival in Venice*. Garrett's tone was as sweet as a bird singing. It was sheer joy. The orchestra played the pizzicato delightfully. A good contrast was provided by the second encore, which was more sombre in mood -- the sarabande from Bach's second sonata.

The Pagnini, incidentally, was also one of the encores – as many as four in total! – that Garrett so generously gave at the end of his second concert on the following afternoon. Another was the last movement from Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*. How aptly this second concert was named "David Garrett Encore".

For this concert, Garrett played four short pieces, the last of which was *Czardas* by Monti. Garrett was in turn lyrical and fiery, capturing the capricious gypsy spirit. At the end of this concert, there was a long autograph session in the lobby, with lots of fans queuing up to catch a glimpse of this unique star.