

# The Promise Of Young Cellist Park

At age 11, his family emigrated from Korea to the United States so he could continue his musical studies; at age 18 he became the youngest member of the Philadelphia Orchestra's cello section. Judging by his recital at the Kennedy Center Terrace Theater Saturday night, Sang Min Park at age 22 is making all the right moves toward a solid career as soloist.

Whether his career glitters or merely twinkles depends on Park. As was evident in Saturday's program, intensity and intellect are there already—the rest may come with age.

No one can doubt the sincerity of his playing. Bach's Suite No. 3 for unaccompanied cello, BWV 1009, and Beethoven's Sonata in A for cello and piano, Op. 69, were sensitively controlled with excellent voicing at mid-register, although accurate intonation in the top notes eluded Park at various critical points in the program.

There is only one obvious fault in his playing, and that can be overcome with practice. Park has the habit of sucking in and expelling his breath with a burst at the start of a new phrase. True, it's an annoying tic that some superb artists share, but Park is young enough to overcome it.

In the Beethoven, the Brahms Sonata No. 2 in F, Op. 99, and the closing "Polonaise Brillante," Op. 3, of Chopin, Park was accompanied by pianist Noreen Cassidy-Polera—who flawlessly matched his musical conviction note for note. If this gifted cellist can restrain himself from trying to push the music too hard, he and Cassidy-Polera have the talent for greatness.

—Mark Carrington