



Scenearound

Dr. Kouros Azar Playing with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra



Dr. Kouros Azar with British Conductor, Sir Simon Rattle

Thousand Oaks-based Plastic Surgeon, Dr. Kouros Azar, traded his scalpel for a violin recently as he traveled to Germany to play in the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under famous British conductor, Sir Simon Rattle. He describes the sequence of events like this: "I began playing the violin at age 9 but quit around 25 when I started my medical residency. In February this year I was on the Berlin Philharmonic website - watching their concerts - when I saw an invitation for amateur applicants to play in the main hall in Berlin with Sir Simon Rattle. I wrote in and described myself as passionate about the violin although I hadn't played in years. However, I assured them that I'd study hard if they accepted me. In mid March I was accepted (much to my delighted shock) and immediately enlisted the help of the indispensable Danielle Belen - a faculty violinist at the Colburn School and concertmaster of the New West Symphony in Thousand Oaks. I bought a new violin and practiced late into the evenings - so motivated was I. The fruits of that commitment paid off rapidly and before I knew it, I was in Berlin with these highly-experienced, world-class musicians. I practiced 5-6 hours a day in my hotel and by the second and third rehearsals, I was ready to go. The first day of the concert was an indescribable feeling: my heart was beating out of my chest and to have Simon Rattle less than 10-feet away from me (they put me in the third row, second from the left) was a priceless experience. The sound of the orchestra was phenomenal and

sometimes intimidatingly loud. It was such a huge success with standing room only and a roaring crowd. This exciting journey would not have been possible without the support of my family and the dedication of my teacher, Danielle Belen."

Dr. Kouros Azar 3rd row 2nd from left

