

NEWS from

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH: Guillermo Figueroa, Music Director and Conductor

Music Director of both Music in the Mountains and the New Mexico Symphony, as well as Principal Guest Conductor of the Puerto Rico Symphony, Guillermo Figueroa's intense, passionate musicianship and elegant technique have earned him international recognition. Critical acclaim also followed the debuts of the Puerto Rico Symphony, under Figueroa's baton, at Carnegie Hall in 2003, the Kennedy Center in 2004 and Spain in 2005.

As a guest conductor, he has appeared with the symphony orchestras of New Jersey, Memphis, Phoenix, Iceland, Colorado, Berkeley, Xalapa (Mexico), Tucson, Santa Fe, Toledo, Fairfax, San Jose, the Juilliard Orchestra, the Baltic Philharmonic in Poland, the New York City Ballet at Lincoln Center, the New England Conservatory orchestra and the Orquesta del Teatro Argentino in La Plata (Buenos Aires). In 2009, he made his debut with the Orquesta de Cordoba in Spain.

Figueroa has collaborated with many of the leading artists of our time, including Itzhak Perlman, YoYo Ma, Hilary Hahn, Placido Domingo, Joshua Bell, Olga Kern, Janos Starker, James Galway, Midori, Horacio Gutierrez, the Emerson String Quartet, Ben Hepner, Rachel Barton Pine, Pepe Romero, Elmar Oliveira, Barry Douglas, Michelle De Young, Jennifer Lamore and Vadim Gluzman.

A Berlioz specialist, he created the most comprehensive Berlioz Festival in the U.S. in 2003 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of that composer. Figueroa has conducted the premieres of works by many important composers, such as Roberto Sierra, Mario Davidovsky, Ernesto Cordero, Miguel del Aguila and Harold Farberman.

Also a renowned violinist, he was Concertmaster and guest conductor of the New York City Ballet for 10 years. Figueroa also is a founding member of the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. With this group, he was Concertmaster and soloist in performances throughout the U.S., Europe and Asia and made over 50 recordings for Deutsche Grammophon.

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Figueroa has given the world premieres of four violin concertos written for him: in 1995, the *Concertino for violin and orchestra* by Mario Davidovsky, at Carnegie Hall with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra; in 2007, the *Double Concerto* by Harold Farberman, with the American Symphony at Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center; in 2008, the *Violin Concerto/The Journey of a Lifetime* by Miguel del Aguila, commissioned by Figueroa and the New Mexico Symphony, and in 2009, *Insula, Suite Concertante for violin and strings* by Ernesto Cordero with the Solisti di Zagreb in Zagreb, Croatia.

He has appeared at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Music in the Vineyards in California, Music from Angel Fire and the El Paso Pro Musica Chamber Festival. With his violinist wife, Valerie Turner, they are the Founders and Artistic Directors of the acclaimed Festival de Musica Rondena chamber series in Albuquerque.

Figueroa has recorded the *Three Violin Sonatas* by Bartok for the Eroica Classical label, with pianist Robert Koenig, and an album of virtuoso violin music by Wieniawski, Sarasate and Kreisler for the NMSO label, with pianist Ivonne Figueroa.

Figueroa studied with his father and uncle at the Conservatory of Music of Puerto Rico. At the Juilliard School, his teachers were Oscar Shumsky and Felix Galimir. His conducting studies were with Harold Farberman in New York.

Figueroa performs on a 1686 Stradivari violin, called the "Figueroa Strad," which has been in his family for more than 50 years.

Figueroa leads the Festival Chamber Orchestra in Kirtland, New Mexico on July 17 and on July 18 at Durango Mountain Resort. The Festival Orchestra performs under his baton July 24, 31 and August 1 at Durango Mountain Resort and July 25 at Community Concert Hall at Fort Lewis College. He performs in a Chamber Music concert at St. Columba Church in Durango on July 22.

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NOTE: Photo and text available in Media Center at www.musicinthemountains.com