

# Oh no, I have an obstructed view of Joshua Roman!

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This past weekend, a group of us attended a subscription concert performance of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* at Benaroya Hall. We collectively hold a block of seats, and it's a mix of regulars and rotating guests. Our seats are close to the stage, made even closer by the hall reconfiguration to accommodate the choir and soloists; we were effectively in the first row. (And if you were wondering what those covered holes in the floor are up near the stage, they're where the supports go for the stage extension.) As we filed into our seats, one of our guests for this particular concert exclaimed in mock consternation, "Oh no, I have an obstructed view of Joshua Roman!" I switched seats, giving our guest a slightly better potential view of the young cellist. In exchange, I got a much better view of Elisa Barston, the new principal second who probably would have gotten most of the ooh-aah attention if it weren't for the even younger new cellist. (Normally, I only get to see the left-hand side of her body, since the Seattle Symphony splits the violins left and right, more in keeping with 19th-century practice. It was somewhat strange seeing her from the other side when she led a string quartet and therefore sat on the left-hand side.)

Ultimately, the seat swap didn't help much with the Joshua Roman viewing opportunities, because the conductor and soloists occupied most of the field of view. Afterwards, we jokingly discussed various ways we could express our Joshua Roman groupie-dom, ranging from giant "We Love You Joshua Roman" placards to floppy-haired wigs. At least I hope they were joking.

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