

## Music



### **Aquinas Piano Trio at the Sherwell Centre in Plymouth (review)**

*25th October 2009*

Accomplished, artistic, assured – these three words alone would warrant the Aquinas Piano Trio its triple-A rating.

In terms of formation, it's just a mere toddler, but its rapid success is easy to understand.

Ruth Rogers (violin), Katherine Jenkinson (cello) and Martin Cousin (piano), all first-rate artists in their own right, have not only played together before in a number of different chamber formats, but they come over as such good friends, which makes their performance as a single musical entity so utterly convincing.

Great dexterity and a perfect ensemble were the order of the day in Haydn's Gypsy Rondo Trio and Mendelssohn's C minor Trio, with Martin dismissing the piano's bristling technical difficulties with real panache.

But there were also moments of expressive tenderness, especially in Debussy's fledgling Trio, where Ruth and Katherine's gloriously rich sound made such a telling impact.

It might have seemed odd to include a work written in 1997 in such an otherwise traditional programme, but Dorset-based Shaun Bracey's Desert Song fitted the bill admirably.

This highly evocative Dubai-inspired snapshot showed the hand of a skilled and practised composer in every respect, crafting such an eminently enjoyable and effective piece.

And had Martin Cousin not been suffering from a debilitating back problem (though not due to any bad-tempered camel ride), the trio would most definitely have given the large audience their well-deserved encore!

PHILIP R BUTTALL



