

## Music



### Gould Piano Trio in Plymouth (review)

*24th October 2008*

It's a good thing there are no more piano trios in the current Plymouth Chamber Music series, as the Gould Piano Trio's performance at the Sherwell Centre will be a hard act to follow.

The Gould has twice visited the city, and of the original ensemble, only violinist, Lucy Gould, remains.

But Alice Neary (cello) proved the perfect partner, playing with the same intensity, and sharing in matters of phrasing and dynamics with the utmost empathy.

Perhaps the jewel in the crown, however, is pianist, Benjamin Frith, whose phenomenal technique is allied to great sensitivity of touch, able to dominate proceedings when required, but equally perceptive to his other role as accompanist.

The Gould Trio has regularly sought to champion composers or works, especially from the Romantic period and later, that now figure less prominently on today's concert programmes.

Opening with Schumann's *Fantasiestücke*, cast as a piano trio, though less unified than the composer's other true piano trios, the Gould followed this with an equally impressive performance of Korngold's Piano Trio, an exotic confection by a precocious thirteen-year-old.

If it was possible to be a shade dismissive of the inherent musical value of these two works, the quite stunning reading of Brahms's First Piano Trio, in its revised form, must rank as one of those truly memorable performances heard over the years, and which made this superb recital so eminently enjoyable.

PHILIP R BUTTALL

