

THE Herald

THE VOICE OF PLYMOUTH

Music deserved a fairer hearing

HAVING read the review of Ivan Ilic's piano recital in the Museum Lunchtime Series, as a professional musician I feel compelled to write in defence of a most interesting and enjoyable concert.

Your critic likened Keeril Makan's composition Afterglow to a piano tuner at work and complained at its length. I disagree wholeheartedly. Robert Schumann (1810-1856), in his advice to young musicians wrote: "Revere what is old, but have a warm heart also for what is new. Indulge no prejudice against unknown names."

Jeanie Moore MVO, concert agent and the Series' organiser, is to be heartily congratulated on her choice of artist and programme which comprised Debussy, Brahms and a new work. Unlike John Cage's 'silent' composition 4'33" (mentioned in the review), which is open to aleatory extraneous noises occurring (coughing, traffic sounds etcetera) during the piece, Afterglow concerned a specific piano note or notes deliberately played, followed by their consequent acoustic resonances (hence the title). Such a piece demanded the utmost concentration and quietness on the audience's part and also required intelligent listening. Unfortunately, too many audiences nationwide tend to lie back blankly, think of England and expect to be seduced by pleasant tunes. All music needs interaction between listener and performer in order to appreciate its deepest meaning.

Ivan Ilic's recital was intelligent, thought-provoking, and most enjoyable. Of course one would have preferred a better instrument, but Ilic's professionalism won through, and the lack of a top-notch Bosendorfer or Steinway did not detract in any major way. However, what did detract were the few members of the audience who were fiddling and rustling with their programme notes. This was unfortunate and annoying, especially as one or two of those guilty should have known better.

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