

Planning pays off for young performers

Arnold Camerata: The Essentially English Chamber Music Festival, 8-10 April 2010

It's taken months of planning, but the opening recital in the three-night Essentially English Chamber Music Festival was well worth all the hard work in preparation.

It was immediately apparent that, whilst these young performers, under their Artistic Director Richard Waters, are still at various stages in their music-college training, they are already fully-fledged players and more than capable of turning in performances of which many established professional ensembles would be proud.

Malcolm Arnold's quirky Wind Quintet showed a deft skill in programming, with a performance arguably the evening's highlight, along with Hannah Lawrance's assured performance of Malcolm Arnold's Fantasy for Clarinet.

Saltash Wesley Methodist Church provided the perfect venue for the second event in the Festival which, in fact, saw Artistic Director Richard Waters playing in front of his home audience, and where the somewhat more intimate setting proved ideal for this particular programme, which featured small, rather than large ensembles.

Arnold's Piano Trio was the ideal work to dispel the more sombre echoes of Rebecca Clarke's Passacaglia for Viola and Piano, drawing an especially assured lead from Cassandra Hamilton (violin) and good interaction with cellist Mark Lindley, again with stalwart support from pianist Erdem Misirliogu.

Whilst the Essentially English Chamber Music Festival was all about introducing local audiences to the wealth of somewhat rarely-heard indigenous music, including that by Malcolm Arnold, it was also very much a learning experience for these highly-talented young instrumentalists.

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Arriving at the venue only to discover that the piano was significantly sharp could have fazed any group of seasoned professionals, and especially wind players whose options here are virtually nil.

But after a few phone calls and a last-minute visit by a nearby, friendly piano-

tuner, the first item could go ahead as planned. Both here and in the next two works, Arnold's mixed Quintet, Op 7, and Horowitz's Oboe Quartet, the supreme quality of these fine players was again self-evident, and clearly to the delight of Sir Malcolm's daughter, Katherine, who attended all three events.

PHILIP R BUTTALL

*Classical Music Writer and Reviewer
writing in The Herald*

A message from Arnold Camerata's President

Being a young musician has always been a hugely demanding and competitive business, but now more than ever. With traditional roles for musicians becoming ever more limited, it requires a certain spark and initiative just to get a foot on the ladder.

I was therefore delighted to hear of this wonderful project that Richard Waters and his fellow-musicians have established. It is a tribute to Richard's creative vision and energy that he has brought together all the necessary elements of programming, performers,

funding, marketing and audiences with such great aplomb.

I am certain that Malcolm Arnold, around whom the whole concept of this Ensemble and Festival is based, would have nothing but admiration for their work and talent. This is indeed a very fitting tribute to one of this country's most versatile and genuinely gifted composers.

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