

Music



Peninsula Doctors' Orchestra with Cordelia Williams in Plymouth (review)

12th October 2009

Most amateur orchestras usually manage a weekly rehearsal, with the luxury of a couple more nearer the performance.

Not so the Peninsula Doctors' Orchestra, whose complex schedule of on-calls and medical emergencies, means that virtually everything has to be crammed into the weekend of the concert itself.

Of course, they could merely have chosen a safe programme for their second annual concert, but that sort of compromise is simply unthinkable for a profession which tends to live life on the edge daily.

Wagner's *Meistersinger* Overture was indeed a bold decision, and more so because unfortunately on the day the violin section was visibly under-strength, despite Cath Gutteridge's assured leadership.

Yes, the playing wasn't perfect, and the dry acoustic easily swallowed up the sound, but it was still a stirring reading and conveyed the composer's intentions, as did the finale from Brahms's Fourth Symphony, a yet more challenging score even for top professional players.

Of course, Grieg's glorious Piano Concerto always steals the show, but this was an especially expressive, yet never under-powered performance from soloist, Cordelia Williams, *pictured*, who clearly enjoyed playing with the orchestra, who then did their very best to rise to the occasion.

However, little of this would have been possible without the encouragement and musical support of conductor, Simon Ible, and a third event next year must surely be the only acceptable prognosis.

PHILIP R BUTTALL

