

Music



Philharmonia Orchestra and Boris Berezovsky in Plymouth (review)

05th October 2008

There could have been no better way to get the 2008/9 Plymouth Orchestral Concert Series underway, than this quite superb performance at Plymouth Pavilions by the Philharmonia Orchestra, under guest conductor, Leif Segerstam.

Opening with Beethoven's Egmont Overture, the reading captured the essence of Goethe's drama, from the music's ponderous opening to triumphant close.

Brahms's First Piano Concerto is essentially as much a symphony as a vehicle for pure display alone.

The solo part demands great technique and immense power, but also calls for the most delicate and lyrical playing, and Boris Berezovsky, *pictured*, proved that he was supreme for the task, from the taxing trills of the opening movement, some beautifully-crafted tone in the Adagio, to the electrifying finale taken at quite breakneck speed.

The partnership between soloist and orchestra is equally crucial, and here there was complete empathy, both in terms of shared dynamics and ensemble tautness.

After such an impressive start, it would seem an immense challenge to raise standards further, but orchestra and conductor managed to surpass themselves in a matchless performance of Sibelius's Second Symphony, reinforcing many of the outstanding qualities heard before - an almost unbelievable dynamic range from a large orchestra, excellent wind soloists, and lush string sound contrasted by a compellingly resonant pizzicato.

But with composer and conductor sharing the same Nordic heritage, such an inspiring 'Finnish' was perhaps always to be expected!

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