

Music



REVIEW: Arnold Camerata

21st November 2010

It was highly appropriate that the Shadows of Romania Music Festival should end with works by the country's greatest composer, George Enescu.

The Arnold Camerata, led by William Melvin, tackled the first movement of the composer's First String Quartet, displaying an intellectual approach and maturity way beyond their age. Not only was the individual part-playing well-disciplined and authoritative, but the ensuing ensemble confirmed a considerable degree of preparation.

Enescu's Concertstuck for Viola and Piano provided the perfect vehicle for director, Richard Waters, to demonstrate his many fine attributes as a player. Outstanding technical control allied to a gloriously warm tone, together with Louisa Lam's excellent accompaniment made this arguably the evening's highlight.

The first performance of Nick Martin's specially-commissioned Still Life was uneventful. Each movement relied basically on the same string techniques, with little variety of movement, texture or indeed pitch, and where even the horn part was virtually suppressed throughout. By definition, music surely merits more than this.

Cassandra Hamilton came up with a virtuoso performance of Ysaye's Ballade for Solo Violin, shrugging off the immense difficulties with great panache, while imbuing the whole performance with its true Romantic spirit and improvisatory feel.

Dunhill's F minor Quintet proved a delightful finale, and where horn-player, Ed Griffiths, could really come into his own, all of which helped to raise the temperature in an otherwise freezing auditorium

PHILIP R BUTTALL

