

Music



REVIEW: Ruth Rogers and Martin Cousin

21st January 2008

Chamber music recitals just don't get much better than this. From the moment violinist, Ruth Rogers, walked on to Plymouth's Sherwell Centre stage, it was clear that here was an artist who simply exuded great warmth and personality, before a single note was even heard!

The playing, of course, was quite superb, from the opening Mozart sonata where classical poise and neatness of articulation were the order of the day, to the sheer panache and virtuosic flamboyance of Saint-Saëns's challenging Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso. Ruth has that rare but absolutely invaluable ability to present music visually, but always managing to avoid contrived and empty gesturing for effect.

Empathy between soloist and accompanist is essential in a duo, and here Ruth was so fortunate in having the services of Martin Cousin, who very sensibly refrained from using the fully-open piano lid until the second half, which contrasted a highly effective reading of Messiaen's *Thème et Variations* with a spectacular performance of Franck's tour de force *Sonata in A*. Here, both players combined immense power with the most delicate playing, and where Ruth's gorgeously rich tone was a pure delight to hear.

In a prestigious concert series where, over the years, most of the top artists have appeared, this recital is right up there with the very best – and with a delightful Kreisler encore thrown in, who could have asked for anything more!

PHILIP R BUTTALL

