

Music at St Andrew's Concert Review

Ashok Klouda - cello and Joseph Middleton - Piano



The organisers of *Music at St Andrew's* are to be congratulated for presenting such wonderful concerts throughout the year – never more so than on Saturday 17 January. A large, appreciative audience was treated to a marvellous recital by a young cellist, Ashok Klouda with Joseph Middleton at the piano.

The programme was well chosen – containing many different styles and began with Bach's 'Sonata in G major' (originally for viola da gamba and harpsichord). From the very first phrase, we heard the beautiful sound this cellist produced and both players showed their perfect ensemble. (I did feel that – just for this item – the lid on the very modern piano might have been lowered).

This was followed by the delightful 'Rondo in G minor' by Dvorák – performed with great character by both players.

Beethoven wrote '5 Sonatas for cello and piano', and the one chosen was Op 102 – very different from his Op. 5. It gives equal importance to both instruments and looks towards the late String Quartets in its intensity. It was played with passion and conviction.

After the Interval, we had a novelty – a solo sonata by Sándor Veress – a Swiss composer of Hungarian Origin. It was

composed in 1966 and full of the most dazzling techniques I have ever seen! I doubt if I would have listened to it on Radio 3, but to WATCH this amazing cellist held me spellbound. He illustrated some of the techniques beforehand and showed his sense of humour by remarking: "It only takes 12 minutes – see you at the end!"

The excellent Joseph Middleton then returned to join Ashok to perform the '5 pieces in folk style' by Schumann. Unlike the better know 'Fantasiestücke', originally composed for clarinet (but often played on the cello), these 5 pieces were written specifically for cello, and were a delight to hear.



I had a distinguished violinist sitting in front of me who looked at the programme with astonishment to read the final item was the Scherzo-Tarantella for VIOLIN and piano by Wieniawski transcribed for the cello by our soloist. It was an amazing display of dazzling virtuosity and received rapturous applause – not least by my violinist friend who stood up clapping and smiling.

We were treated to a beautiful, gentle encore – the slow movement of Chopin's cello and piano sonata – quite a rarity.

So ended a memorable concert, and I am sure all the audience would wish these two highly gifted performers every success in their future careers.

Deidre Knight

