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MARRINER, BEATSON & PETROV

17–18 January 2020

Bridport Arts Centre (Dorset)

Ilminster Arts Centre (Somerset), Crewkerne Dance House (Somerset)

The 15th Season of Concerts in the West, the charity that annually brings nine short concert tours of younger generation musicians to the region, began with three fund-raiser performances. The celebrity team of Andrew Marriner (clarinet), Alasdair Beaton (piano) and Michael Petrov (cello) presented a programme of music for capacity audiences in Bridport, Ilminster and Crewkerne. Marriner and Beatson are Patrons of this much respected and valued organisation and with the outstanding cellist, Michael Petrov were a formidable trio with immense skill and experience.

They began their programme with Beethoven’s Trio No.4 Opus 11, a work guaranteed to draw the audience into a mood of eager anticipation and so it proved. This is Beethoven in his late twenties, already technically very accomplished and not yet troubled by health or political concerns.

What followed was a late work of a composer who was indeed experiencing poor health, fatigue and lacking in motivation to write. However, in 1922 Gabriel Fauré did find the strength to construct a successful trio and a work that greatly enriched the clarinet-piano-cello repertoire.

After the interval the audiences were treated to Schumann’s Adagio and Allegro Opus 70 and the A minor Trio Op 114 by Brahms. The Schumann piece, originally written in the late 1840s for horn and piano, was performed by Michael Petrov using a warm and silk-like cello tone and carefully nuanced melodic phrasing.

In 1890 when Brahms thought he had nothing left to say as a composer and would cease composing, he heard the clarinettist Richard Mühifeld and was inspired to write the Op 114 Trio. It is a consummate work, full of equal opportunity and inter-instrumental discourse. The technical ease and musicianship of Andrew Marriner’s playing, honed and refined over many professional years, was for all to hear.

Throughout the programme the masterly piano playing of Alasdair Beatson was continuously in evidence. Although Beatson is often a soloist, it was his sensitivities as an integral ensemble player that the audiences were treated to on this occasion. His every note is considered for its place within the piano part itself and its relationship to the other instrumental parts.

These concerts were quite correctly cause for celebration: Concerts in the West, begun by its current Artistic and Executive Director Catherine Maddocks, is now in its fifteenth glorious year, continues to search for new opportunities and to engage yet more quality musicians to bring the riches of the classical music to west country audiences.

Andrew Maddocks 2020

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