

Strings Attached: Brighton and Hove Chamber Music Society



Feedback from Strings Attached Friends on the 2016/2017 Coffee Concert Season

Ensembles

The variety of ensemble types over the season (two string quartets, three piano trios and a solo guitarist) was, in general, appreciated, although a minority would prefer all concerts to be string quartets. The variety in ensemble type allows for a wider repertoire. Some were not at all sure about the prospect of a solo guitar concert, but Sean Shibe appears to have won us over with the unusual quality of his playing. He drew a larger audience than we expected.

It was generally appreciated that we now have some firm favourites who are consistently appreciated including the Heath and Castalian Quartets, both of which were singled out for particular praise. The three trios brought variety, culminating with the Trio Wanderer, better known in mainland Europe, who brought a depth of maturity to the final concert which was appreciated (as was the engaging energy of younger performers Amy Jarman Oliver Stankiewicz. and Tom Poster.)

All in all the variety of ensembles was popular.

Repertoire

The pattern of interspersing one modern piece between two older ones is generally appreciated (with a plea for more Shostakovich). Eighteen different composers from the eighteenth to Adès in the twenty first century featured - an impressively high number ensuring our experience was varied and interesting. There was a particularly large number - nine - twentieth century composers represented.

Rather curiously perhaps there was no Mozart, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Bartòk Shostakovich or Martinů - all prolific chamber music producers. We love them all and would like to hear them occasionally at least.

Venue

The temporary move to ACCA has been a resounding success. It's acoustic is widely regarded as excellent. We do miss concerts in the round, however, and some have concerns about lighting on the stage - we like to be able to see the programme and read the programme notes. The availability of parking and public transport links seem to have worked well though disabled parking could be better. We do miss the Corn Exchange's lovely view of the trees and the easy availability of lunch venues afterwards.

Friends arrangements

The sherry and apple juice seems to be going down very well and is much preferred to queuing for unexciting coffee. Staff are always friendly and helpful and the separate room provides a good venue for conversation amongst friends.

We do wish ACCA would turn on their 'real' coffee machine for those who arrive early...

Staff

The exceptional friendliness and helpfulness of Dome and ACCA staff is much appreciated - they make us feel very welcome and expert, as was demonstrated when one concert goer had to be taken out in an evacuation chair. This really does make a big difference to our experience.

Summary

This was, in general, felt to have been an excellent season with very few negative comments on any aspect of our experience.