



Director:
Hervé Corre de Valmalette

The HERALD, Saturday, October 17, 1998

Review

Music

Eric Ruske, RSAMD,
Glasgow
Michael Tumelty

THE French Horn, as all music lovers are aware, is a smooth-talking delinquent of an instrument. It can coo and caress, it can produce the most seductive, mellifluous tone of any musical instrument, and at its most mellow it can insinuate its way into the bloodstream and quicken the pulse. But it is a temperamental and unreliable beast, inherently unstable in its tone, and given to spluttering, squawking, choking, throttling, and

cracking up at the slightest provocation, sounding then more like a wounded beast at bay.

All of which makes what American horn genius Eric Ruske (nimblely accompanied by Victor Sangiorgio) produced yesterday the more remarkable. If I tell you that seasoned professional horn and brass players were utterly agog at the end of his jam-packed, mini-marathon recital yesterday, during which he did not leave the stage once and paused long enough only to empty the cistern of his wondrous infernal machine, then you can understand how completely gobsmacked were the rest of us lesser mortals.

Ruske, who started his career at the top – as a principal in the Cleveland Orchestra – and has worked his way up ever since, is one of the world's great musicians. As he roared through a dense programme of music – Bach, Mozart, Strauss, Grieg and numerous others – his endurance was a genuine marvel. But, even at full stretch – whether at speed in a Mozart Sonata or dead slow in Franz Strauss's gorgeous Notturmo, at the very top or deepest depths of the instrument, or in his sensational final performance of Monti's Csardas, every note was pure music – no bravado, no display for its own sake. Sweet stuff.

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