

Review - Duo Rendezvous

This could be a short review. They're amazing. There, done.

Of course, much more can be said, and thank goodness it's a review, and not a critique, because there really wasn't much of anything *to* critique. The musicianship and calibre of play displayed by the aptly named Duo Rendezvous on Tuesday night was nothing short of astonishing.

Comprised of Jasper Wood on a Stefano Scarampella violin (a gorgeous sounding instrument from 1914) and Daniel Bolshoy on classical guitar, Duo Rendezvous took a very appreciative audience on a trip, from Eastern Europe, to Spain, then through South America. From the beautiful adaptation of Bach's Suite in E Minor to the fiery finale to the second half, a piece called Csardas (meaning tavern), they didn't falter. The slow movements were emotional, but not dragging and self indulgent, and even the fastest movements were clean, dynamic, and often left a listener wondering if there were more than just the two of them. Indeed, Bolshoy on his own played with a virtuosity that could trick you into believing there were two guitarists (in particular the Sonata Giocoso, a solo guitar piece).

While intense and focussed during a performance, Jasper and Daniel had an easy rapport and light humour that worked well with this show. I always appreciate getting some historical context for any music, especially as some of the songs have very colourful histories! (Undeniably, sometimes the stories are just weird, as the Suite Populaire Espagnole proves). Personally, I think too many people take Classical music too seriously - remember, back then it was just called music, and it *was* fun and even improvised.

I suppose there must be one critique. Given the nature and extreme difficulty of this music, the physical stage presence was rather static, at least to those for whom gyrations and pyrotechnics equate to a good show. But that's not their audience. Duo Rendezvous plays a music that invites you to close your eyes and open your mind, let images just happen and follow, and should you ever get a chance to see them, I suggest you do just that.

by Neville Bowman – musician, composer, actor.