

Carlisle Music Society. A Playful Tournament. Emma Abbate and Julien Perkins.

Four hands on one piano was a popular way of getting to know and enjoying music before the age of the gramophone - many works were arranged for and specially composed for the medium. In this recital husband and wife pianists, Emma Abbate and Julian Perkins, played a selection of original works for piano duet.

W.A.Mozart's Sonata in C, Kv19d is thought to have been first performed in London in 1765 by nine year old Wolfgang and his sister, Nannerl. This evening it received a glittering performance, especially the last movement which was full of fast scale passages. Schubert's great F minor Fantasy, composed in the last year of his life (1828), a work of great depth, was the most substantial piece of the evening. Schubert's lovely melodies came through, but I felt it could have had more emotional impact. Rachmaninov's lovely Romance in G, played with great charm, and his lively Polka Italienne ended the first part. After the interval it was refreshing to hear imaginative performances of music more familiar as orchestral arrangements: two of Dvorak's 'Slavonic Dances' and Debussy's evocative 'Petite Suite'. In between these, 'Tournament for Twenty Fingers' by Stephen Dodgson was a very harmonious duel, surprisingly so for a work written in the mid 20th century. This was affectionately played by the duetists who had been coached by the composer himself. The encore was a spirited Polonaise by Wagner, composed in his late teens. The next Carlisle Music Society recital is a guitar recital given by Manus Noble on Thursday 19th March.

Tom Howe